

Appropriations Committee

Testimony in support of Department of Public Health Family Planning Funding
H.B. 5005: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

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February 21, 2020

The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-six years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security, combat discrimination, and increase access to reproductive healthcare.

CWEALF is also an active member of the Coalition for Choice, a group led by Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) that promotes policies that improve women's access to reproductive healthcare and protects a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

CWEALF sincerely thanks Governor Lamont and our elected leaders for their demonstrated commitment to support \$1.2 million in funding for continued access to affordable preventive reproductive health care. In August 2019, Planned Parenthood affiliates across the United States, including PPSNE, were forced out of the federal Title X Family Planning program, the only federal program dedicated solely to supporting the delivery of family planning and related preventive healthcare services.

The economic security of women and their families is directly impacted by women's access to affordable, accessible, and quality health care. Research shows that the ability to decide when and whether to become a parent due to access to reproductive health care and birth control increases women's participation in the workforce and lifetime earnings; however, these services are often unaffordable.

Title X provides affordable birth control and reproductive health care to people who are low income and otherwise could not afford access to these services on their own. In 2016, an estimated 180,670 women in Connecticut needed publicly supported contraceptive services and supplies. Connecticut women who obtained publicly supported contraceptives

and supplies from Title X providers were able to postpone or avoid 7,420 unintended pregnancies and 2,510 abortions.¹

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is critical to providing family planning care and health care services in Connecticut. In 2018, PPSNE serviced 41,096 Title X at 11 health centers, which accounted for 88% of those served by Title X in our state.

In a national climate that is persistent in its threats to dismantle basic human rights, Connecticut must continue to protect access to sexual and reproductive health care services, especially for our state's most vulnerable residents. We urge the Committee and General Assembly to carry out the Governor's commitment to invest in preventive health care for those who need it most.

¹<https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=CT&topics=92+93+94+96+97+98+114+113&dataset=data>