



**Testimony for Public Hearing
Appropriations Committee
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**Liz Gustafson, MSW
State Director
NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
1 Main Street, Suite T4
Hartford, CT 06106**

H.B. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Liz Gustafson and I am the State Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut. I testify in strong support of family planning funding allocated in the Department of Public Health in H.B. 5005 *An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021*. Planned Parenthood is frequently the sole option for individuals who are uninsured or those who are low income, and we must ensure the 41,000 people who utilize Title X funding in the State of Connecticut can continue to access a full range of reproductive health care.

Title X is the only federal program dedicated to providing family planning services for low-income patients and has received bipartisan support for decades. This program plays an irreplaceable role in providing a full range of preventative, necessary reproductive health care, and this unethical and harmful attack executed by the Trump- essentially forces health care providers to lie and mislead patients about their care, and forces facilities that offer abortions to institute exceptionally cost-prohibitive “physical separation” requirements.

This is not only an issue of reproductive freedom, but an economic, racial, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ rights and justice issue. Make no mistake, this change in Title X funding illustrates a strategy to increase barriers to essential reproductive health care such as wellness exams, birth control, STI/STD testing and treatment, and cancer screenings. In 2018, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England provided care to 88% of those served by Title X at 11 health centers, which highlights the significant role they play in ensuring access to affordable health care services. Additionally, this rule not only impacts Planned Parenthood, but any health care provider that participates in the Title X program- from community health centers like Fair Haven Community Health Center to hospitals in the State of Connecticut.

Although PPSNE intends to keep each center open and will not make significant changes to their sliding fee scale, it is clear that Title X funds will need to be replaced to ensure the same level of care for those that are uninsured or covered by Medicaid. It is no secret that across the country health disparities are

disproportionately experienced by populations who have historically faced significant barriers when accessing care, and Title X funding provided substantial support to fight these inequities. Health care is a human right, and the allocation of 1.2 million in the Department of Public Health budget for family planning services will confirm the state's commitment to the reproductive health care needs of its' residents.

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut strongly supports the allocation of family planning funding in the Department of Public Health in H.B. 5005 *An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021*. We urge all lawmakers to support a budget that ensures all Connecticut residents can continue to access necessary, preventative comprehensive reproductive health care.

Thank you very much,

Liz Gustafson, NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut