
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

March 15, 2017

Chair Greenlick, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

As reproductive health advocates, we have seen firsthand what happens when Oregonians have access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services: The rate of unintended pregnancies goes down. In fact, a recent report from the Guttmacher Institute illustrates that Oregon unintended pregnancy rates have reached a historic low. This comes as no surprise, since Oregon recently became the easiest place in the country to access birth control.

However, even in Oregon disparities in access to reproductive health information and services persist. The rate of unintended pregnancy among women with incomes below the federal poverty level is more than five times the rate among higher income women, and the unintended pregnancy rate among African American and Latina women is approximately twice as high as that of their non-Hispanic white peers. Furthermore, even when all Oregonians have coverage for the most effective methods of contraception, women will continue to need access to safe, legal abortion. Yet, abortion remains unaffordable for over 43,000 women in our state. Access to quality health care, resources and information is a fundamental right for all people and shouldn't depend on who you are or where you live.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon is writing to thank you for your consideration of the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391). This important legislation establishes comprehensive coverage for the full spectrum of reproductive health services — including family planning, abortion and postpartum care — for all Oregonians, regardless of income, citizenship status, gender identity or type of insurance. Restrictions on reproductive health care can have profoundly harmful effects on public health, particularly for those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality care. This legislation ensures that all Oregonians are able to decide if and when they have children based on what's best for them and their family's circumstances.

Each year, Planned Parenthood provides services to more than 60,000 Oregonians at our 12 health centers throughout the state. We do more than any other organization to reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy, but significant gaps in coverage remain. We support the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391) to ensure that the women, men and young people we serve have access to the reproductive health care they need. We hope that you will join us in support of HB 3391.

Sincerely,



Mary Nolan
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon