

As Mainers, we should be doing as much as we can to protect and provide for its people. Women in Maine, especially in Piscataquis county, are struggling for access to family planning centers. Over 2,890 women are without a reproductive health facility and over 1,000 of those women are in need of this public service.<sup>1</sup> From lack of facilities, women are forced to travel an uncomfortable distance for information about reproductive health that should be provided right in their backyard. President Donald Trump's recent health care administration policy changes are damaging family planning centers, outlining that healthcare providers are no longer allowed to refer their patients to abortion centers. Through this, several Planned Parenthood facilities in cities such as Cincinnati and Springdale Ohio have been closed even though they do not provide abortion care. Family planning centers do not unitarily provide information about abortion, but also provide women with other health options such as STD testing, providing birth control methods and screening women for both breast and cervical cancer, the most common reason for women to visit these facilities.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there has been a steady decline, currently falling at around 8%, in teenage pregnancy in ages ranging from 15-19<sup>2</sup>. This is due to the opening of family planning centers around the United States, with teenagers receiving the proper education through medical professionals. Teenagers are currently more susceptible to getting birth control and obtaining the necessary information to remain safe and responsible when it comes to copulation. According to the CDCP, "Only about 50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age, whereas approximately 90% of women who do not give birth during adolescence graduate from high school."<sup>3</sup> So with this in mind, since women are not receiving the necessary education about their own bodies, it is affecting their ability to receive the standard education teenagers need to become successful in their adult lives.

What women are asking for is simple. We want the right to be educated about our bodies by a medical professional. It is important to acquire the knowledge needed to keep ourselves safe and successful for our future endeavors- because it is our time to stand strong and become the people we know we can be. All we are asking for is the right to access information- a defining right afforded to all United States citizens. This is a simple request that has been blown out of proportion and is infringing on our access to education. So, let us continue to fight for reproductive health education and assistance, because believe it or not, women are responsible and respectable human beings who are not exactly asking for much.

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<sup>1</sup> "Birth Control Access." 2019 | Power to Decide. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/access/birth-control-access>.

<sup>2</sup> "About Teen Pregnancy." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 1, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> "About Teen Pregnancy." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 1, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>.