



April 11, 2018

Representative John Hunt, Chair  
New Hampshire House Commerce Committee  
New Hampshire House of Representatives  
107 North Main Street  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 421

Dear Chairman Hunt and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in equality and opportunity for New Hampshire women and girls through research, education, advocacy, and philanthropy. We support SB 421 and urge the Committee to recommend "Ought to Pass" on the bill.

SB 421 would update New Hampshire's existing contraceptive equity law, which has been on the books since 1999, to guarantee New Hampshire women can access prescription birth control without cost-sharing and with 12-month supplies if prescribed by their healthcare providers. These are common-sense measures that will make sure that obstacles like cost, transportation, and geography don't get in the way of essential preventive healthcare for women.

Women use prescription birth control to prevent pregnancy and to manage conditions such as endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and fibroids. More than half of women who use birth control pills rely on them at least in part for something other than pregnancy prevention. SB 421 will reduce unintended pregnancy and help ensure that women who use prescription birth control for non-contraceptive purposes stay healthy.

Modern prescription birth control, and the family planning it makes possible, was one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to promoting maternal and child health, prescription birth control has been transformational for women's educational opportunities and economic success. Access to prescription birth control promotes attainment of higher education. The number of women who finish college today is a staggering six times what it was before the legalization of birth control. Today women earn half of all doctoral, medical, and law degrees. Access to prescription birth control is also a major driver of women's increased earnings, having helped shrink the "wage gap" between working men and women. Today women are the primary breadwinners in more than 40 percent of American households with children.

When women are healthy and prosperous, their families succeed and our communities grow stronger. Prescription birth control is essential preventive healthcare that allows women to plan their families and their lives. SB 421 will bring New Hampshire's contraceptive equity law into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and reduce the barriers that can limit access.

Attached to this testimony is a copy of the most recent edition of the New Hampshire Women's Foundation's quarterly research series, *Gender Matters*. This *Gender Matters* edition discusses unintended pregnancy, teen birth, and prescription birth control. I hope you will find it useful as you consider SB 421. The New Hampshire Women's Foundation is pleased to be a resource to the Committee if members have any questions or concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "SM Dustin".

Sarah Mattson Dustin  
Director of Policy

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