



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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Testimony in Opposition to
Senate Bill 274

AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND OTHER FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS.

Human Services Committee
Public Hearing
March 5, 2020

Legislative Office Building, Room 2A

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of Connecticut's Catholic Bishops, opposes Senate Bill 274. Specifically, we oppose state payments to Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) and other clinics on account of their voluntary forfeiture, or anticipated forfeiture, of federal Title X family planning grants. At first glance, this bill raises several serious concerns.

- SB 274 shows preferential treatment by funding an organization that reports millions of dollars in net gains year over year and has extraordinary fundraising capacity at the state and national level, while other non-profits have experienced severe cutbacks to essential social services.
- This bill, as written, remains fundamentally vague in scope, intent, and practice.
 - a. Is this a one-time or recurring expenditure?
 - b. What restrictions are there regarding the use of these funds?
 - c. What auditing, guidelines, and administration requirements are there?
 - d. Who will provide oversight and how?
 - e. Does "any reduction in federal funding" mean any reduction in *any* federal funds the organization receives or funding related to grants awarded under Title X?
 - f. How will the amount of funding be determined since past Title X project funding depended on regional needs that varied over time?
- The state provides free family planning services for those who are income eligible through the state HUSKY Limited Family Planning Benefit Program, which has higher income thresholds than Title X has for both free and reduced fee services.
- One Title X grantee has not forfeited its Title X funds, which are substantially greater than past grants. Is this grantee included in this bill?

SB 274 sets a disturbing precedent by funding particular nonprofits when many others have experienced severe cutbacks to essential social services. These payments are unnecessary since PPSNE 990 financial reports reveal an organization that is financially thriving with millions of dollars in reserve. (See Attachment 1). In what other instance has a non-profit organization with abundant financial wealth voluntarily rejected federal funds, and in turn, received an unrestricted line item in the state budget?

Moreover, the state provides free family planning services through the HUSKY Family Planning Limited Benefit Program similar to those offered on a sliding scale in Title X family planning projects. PPSNE, Cornell Scott-Hill Health, and Fair Haven Community Health have utilized HUSKY in their Title X projects.¹ HUSKY (Medicaid) includes free abortions², free birth control, free STD testing and treatment, and free counseling. In 2018 among Connecticut Title X beneficiaries, most were income eligible for HUSKY FPLB or HUSKY. The remainder would have incurred reasonable

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/sites/default/files/title-x-fpar-2018-national-summary.pdf> , Exhibits B-2, B-3b. Uninsured in these exhibits include all without primary care insurance, including those only on HUSKY FPLB.

² Conn. Agency Regs. §§ 17b-262-348.

charges not on a sliding fee scale based on their reported income per Title X guidelines. For PPSNE, Title X funded general operations,³ such as outreach and extended office hours. Yet, PPSNE did not function only as a Title X clinic.

HUSKY covers core clinical family planning services, treatments, and medications that are billed, whereas Title X grants can be applied to infrastructure payments, such as utility payments and payments to office staff that are also involved in non-Title X business. Many Connecticut residents objected to the federal government underwriting these infrastructure payments for an organization that is the largest provider and promoter of abortions in the state and country. These same objections apply to this bill, SB 274.

Finally, it is unclear whether this bill contemplates funding Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center. A possible inclusion of \$300,000 for Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center is particularly puzzling since this health center is still a Title X recipient. Last year, Cornell Scott received \$300,000 in Title X grants and a supplemental \$150,000 Title X grant, which is renewable in April 2020. As Community Health Centers, Cornell Scott-Hill Health and Fair Haven receive federal funds for comprehensive primary care, including family planning services, which are offered on a sliding scale. Since SB 274 is intended to fund ex-Title X recipients, Cornell Scott-Hill Health ought to be excluded as a redundant expenditure.

In sum, the Conference urges this committee to reject S.B. 274 as an unnecessary, questionable, and immoral allocation of state funds.

³https://www.cga.ct.gov/ph/med/related/20190101_Women%20&%20Childrens%20Health%20Committee/20191021/PP%20Medical%20and%20Post%20Title%20X%20Presentation.pdf