



To: Chair Wayne MacDonald, Vice Chair Lisa Mazur, and the House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs

Re: Testimony regarding Senate Bill 36, *relative to the collection and reporting of abortion statistics by health care providers and medical facilities*

Date: April 23, 2025

Position: NEUTRAL

Background

Reproductive Equity Now works across New England to make equitable access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care a reality for all people regardless of their gender, age, race, ethnicity, zip code, income, immigration status, disability, or sexual orientation. Advancing reproductive justice and eliminating barriers to abortion care are central to our mission.

As an organization that works across several New England states that do have formalized structures for reporting of abortion data, we understand that data collection has the potential to be used to inform positive public health outcomes. We are grateful to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for working with providers to amend SB 36 to better address the safety and privacy of patients and providers alike, but remain concerned that the lack of investment in New Hampshire's family planning infrastructure, the additional costs this legislation would impose on the state's Department of Health and Human Services, and the burden it would place on reproductive health care providers would outweigh and impede the success of any data collection efforts.

Public Health Context & Costs

While data collection has the potential to be utilized for positive public health outcomes, including informing expanded models of care, informing the best way to educate and inform New Hampshire residents of the availability of services, and understanding how statewide initiatives can fill gaps in access, such data collection must go hand in hand with appropriate investment in New Hampshire's family planning infrastructure. Data collection on abortion care in particular can inform the need for comprehensive sexual education, and identify regions where additional efforts are needed to reduce teen pregnancy and reduce unintended pregnancies as a whole. We cannot, however, ignore the fact that New Hampshire's Executive Council has repeatedly declined to approve any family planning funding for sexual and reproductive health care clinics that also provide abortion care, hindering their ability to provide robust sexual and reproductive health care that meets these public health goals.¹ Furthermore, the FY2026-FY2027 state budget recently adopted by the House of Representatives proposes to entirely eliminate the state's Family Planning Program.

¹ Steven Porter, *N.H. executive council rejects family planning contracts 5th time in three years*, BOSTON GLOBE (Nov. 29, 2023, 4:00PM), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/11/29/metro/nh-executive-council-rejects-family-planning-contracts-5th-time-thee-years/>.

The New Hampshire's Department of Health & Human Services has estimated that the cost of the required system changes and required staffing for this data collection would be approximately \$947,000 in FY2027 and \$123,000 in FY2028. They indicated that their current operating budget does not include allocated funds for the creation, implementation, and operation of the necessary surveillance system that would need to be stood up to collect abortion-related data safely and securely.² With the FY2026-FY2027 state budget recently adopted by the House of Representatives proposing \$46 million in total cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services, and no authorization to hire a staff person required to oversee this system, we are concerned about the further strain this would place on the Department.³

Conclusion

Due to amended language adopted by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, Reproductive Equity Now no longer opposes this bill, but we do remain concerned about the potential burden it would impose on New Hampshire's Department of Health & Human Services, as well as the burden it would impose on reproductive health care providers. It is our hope that in the future, if thoughtfully designed and well-resourced, this kind of data collection could be a powerful tool to further public health outcomes, enabling the development of targeted sexual and reproductive health interventions, evidence-based policies, and resource allocation strategies. We thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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² Fiscal Note, SB 36 - As Amended by the Senate, 170th Gen. Court (2025).

³ *NH House passes budget plan that includes deep spending cuts, eliminates state jobs*, NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC RADIO (April 10, 2025 10:06 PM), <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2025-04-10/nh-house-passes-budget-plan-that-includes-deep-spending-cuts-eliminate-s-state-jobs>.