



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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DOMESTIC GAG RULE REDUCES CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS FOR NEARLY 80,000 WOMEN LIVING IN MAINE

(Washington, D.C.) — According to data released by [Power to Decide](#), [nearly all \(98.8%\) of Maine women](#) of reproductive age (13-44) in need of publicly funded contraception have been impacted by the implementation of the Title X Family Planning Program “domestic gag rule.” Fifteen of 16 of Maine’s counties have lost some or all of their Title X resources to support vital health services leaving an estimated 79,700 women with less access.

The [domestic gag rule](#) requires health providers receiving Title X funds to withhold information from patients about abortion services and care. In addition, health centers are required to cease providing abortion care with non-Title X funds at sites that offer Title X supported services, such as contraceptive care, breast and cervical cancer screening and STI testing. The rule requires that abortion services, no matter how they are funded, be performed at a separate physical site, which is impossible for many health centers.

“Access for almost all women who are living at or below 250% of the poverty level in Maine has been impacted by the implementation of the domestic gag rule,” said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide. “The domestic gag rule exacerbates an already challenging contraceptive access landscape for women struggling to make ends meet. These women face untenable decisions about how they will use already limited dollars to pay for transportation and child care costs to get to a clinic just to get the contraception they need.”

Data from [Power to Decide](#) show that 52,630 [women living](#) at or below 250% of the poverty level in Maine live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods. Nationally, more than 19 million U.S. women of low income live in [contraceptive deserts](#).

In this challenging landscape, states like Maine can take proactive steps to partially alleviate the impact of damaging federal policies and to expand access to contraception in various ways. Maine has already expanded Medicaid to low-income adults, which helps decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, give them contraceptive coverage they need to live healthy lives. In addition, Maine requires insurance to cover an extended supply of prescription contraceptives and has enacted policy that protects insurance coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods. To further expand access, Maine could allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception. More information about these policies can be found [here](#).

Power to Decide is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to ensure all people—no matter who they are, where they live or what their economic status might be—have the power to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Please visit us at www.PowerToDecide.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.