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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

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Columbus City Attorney Leads Nationwide Effort By Municipalities to Support Planned Parenthood's Lawsuit to Protect Title X Funding

*Columbus Leads U.S. Cities in Filing Amicus Brief in Support of Planned
Parenthood's Appeal*

COLUMBUS, OH—Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus has filed an amicus brief, joined by other cities, in support of Planned Parenthood's request that a federal court issue a preliminary injunction to prevent the Department of Health and Human Services from administering grants in accordance with the newly proposed 2018 Title X funding requirements. The legality of HHS's action is currently on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Columbus and its municipal partners chose to enter the litigation at this stage because of the immediate and irreparable harm that cities will face if HHS is allowed to move forward with the funding requirements without Court review.

Title X funding has long been used to expand access to contraceptive care and reproductive health care for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals. Women and men across the country rely on Title X for basic health care, including a broad range of family planning and contraception services, cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment for STIs and testing and links to care for HIV/AIDs; infertility services; screening for high blood pressure, anemia, and diabetes; and referrals for other health services.

"It's our obligation as elected leaders to protect the most vulnerable in our community, and ensuring our residents have access to health care services they need is a top priority," said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. "With these new requirements, the Trump Administration puts in jeopardy more than 10,000 Columbus residents who rely on this funding for a broad range of health care services. We are proud to lead this multi-city effort which seeks to protect that care."

In February, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced new, more restrictive requirements for organizations to meet in order to secure Title X funding. If the Court doesn't step in with the preliminary injunction to pause the new funding requirements, existing grants will expire August 31, 2018. Grants under the new criteria are set to be issued on September 1, 2018.

"Cutting Title X funding will hurt the health and financial security of Ohio families by interfering with the health care of thousands of Columbus residents," said Columbus City Councilmember Elizabeth Brown. "We're standing against this wrong-headed decision by the federal administration because for the thousands who rely on Planned Parenthood, their access to cancer screenings, STI treatment, and other preventive care is now in jeopardy. What's more, the dollars spent on

reproductive healthcare save seven times the public investment by improving health outcomes and increasing workforce participation.”

Additional U.S. cities joining today’s amicus brief are Cincinnati, Dayton, Philadelphia, St. Paul, Duluth, Albany, Seattle, and Austin. State attorneys general from around the country also filed an amicus brief in the D.C. Circuit in support of Planned Parenthood’s request for a preliminary injunction to protect access to preventative care through Title X.

Columbus City Auditor Megan Kilgore added, “Publicly funded family planning is one of our government’s smartest, most economically efficient, and most cost-effective investments. This is why, historically, funding comprehensive family planning has been a bipartisan and prioritized issue. The President’s proposal to undo a program with proven benefits for the health of women and families is not only baffling, it is a direct threat to the economic security of many thousands of Ohio households.

Sasha Samberg-Champion of Relman, Dane & Colfax PLLC is serving as co-counsel alongside the Columbus City Attorney. Relman, Dane & Colfax PLLC is a national civil rights law firm based in Washington, D.C.

“We are proud to assist Columbus in providing the court of appeals with critical information about the detrimental impact HHS’s action will have on the ground,” said Sasha Samberg-Champion, counsel at Relman, Dane & Colfax PLLC. “It is unfortunate that HHS did not see fit to engage in the required notice-and-comment procedures to gather this information itself before acting.”

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