

## **Support HB 477**

Uploaded by: Janice Bird, MD

Position: FAV



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of HB 477, Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements

TO: Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Janice Bird, MD Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Lead Advocate for Reproductive Health Care Rights

DATE: February 14, 2023

The members of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland ask for your support of HB 477, the Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms that all of our bodies are sacred, and that we are each endowed with the twin gifts of agency and conscience. Each of us should have the power to decide what does—and doesn't—happen to our bodies at every moment of our lives because consent and bodily autonomy are holy.

This bill will create the process for each public senior higher education institution, in consultation with students, to develop and implement a reproductive health services plan to provide at the institution or to refer students to a comprehensive range of reproductive health services. The bill requires that the Maryland Department of Health, on request, provide assistance to a public senior higher education institution in developing the plan. Access to—and financial payment for—these reproductive health services reduces disparities in resources that may make it difficult for certain groups of people to exercise autonomy over their own bodies.

Please vote YES for HB 477!

Sincerely,  
Janice Bird, MD  
UULM-MD Lead Advocate for Reproductive Health Care Rights

# **HPP HB 477 Testimony- FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessica Emerson

Position: FAV

## Testimony of the Human Trafficking Prevention Project

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**BILL NO:** House Bill 477  
**TITLE:** Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements  
**COMMITTEE:** Appropriations  
**HEARING DATE:** February 14, 2023  
**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

House Bill 477 would require public institutions of higher education to develop policies that guarantee students access to emergency contraceptives and medicated abortions. The Human Trafficking Prevention Project at the University of Baltimore School of Law supports this bill because it will improve access to a full range of sexual health services on campuses, allowing students to maintain bodily autonomy while also eliminating burdens associated with reproductive health care and educational success. For students who engage in high-risk sexual activity and/or experience sexual violence, such as those students engaging in sex work or who have been trafficked, House Bill 477 is crucial to aid in both their academic success *and* their healing.

According to the National Library of Medicine, 61% of women who have children while enrolled in college drop out before earning a degree. The US Centers for Disease Control reports that college aged people (between 15-24 years old) account for nearly half of all STIs in the country. For those students, seeing a provider, accessing trusted information, and finding the right birth control could mean missed classes, time off from work, hours on public transportation and an egregious medical bill. Limited access to contraception, safe abortions, and other reproductive healthcare services is not only detrimental to educational success, but also promotes systemic inequality since the people who are most at risk for dropping out of college —low-income Americans and racial minorities—are also the ones who are most likely to unexpectedly become pregnant at an early age. These ethnic and socioeconomic disparities will only be exasperated if we don't take immediate action.

The need for more accessible reproductive services is even more dire for victims of human trafficking, given that high-risk sexual activity and sexual violence is such a common part of their victimization. Unsurprisingly, the majority of sex trafficking survivors experience pregnancy, miscarriage, and abortion either during or after their trafficking.<sup>1</sup> For students who trade sex by choice or out of circumstance, access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare is sorely lacking due to the discrimination, stigma, and criminalization that these individuals routinely face.<sup>2</sup> A full range of reproductive health services available at public institutions of higher education would allow these students to continue their education, in turn allowing them to take essential steps towards financial independence and self-fulfillment.

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<sup>1</sup> See generally, Freedom Network USA, *Human Trafficking Survivors and Reproductive Rights* (Apr. 2015), <https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2016/12/HT-and-Reproductive-Rights.pdf>; Laura J. Lederer & Christopher A. Wetzel, *The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities* 79 (2014), <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking-and-Implications-for-Identifying-Victims-Lederer.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See generally Azade Zenouzi, et. al., *Reproductive Health Concerns of Women with High Risk Sexual Behaviors* (2021), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/23779608211017779>.

It is imperative that Maryland's public colleges and universities take a vested interest in helping their students stay in school, graduate, and build a lifetime of opportunity. In order to do so, Maryland must ensure that *all* students have access to a full range of sexual health services as a strategic investment in their collegiate success. For students who trade sex, regardless of their reason for doing so, improved access to these services would help support them as they further their education and improve the range of choices which lie ahead. For these reasons, the Human Trafficking Prevention Project at the University of Baltimore School of Law supports House Bill 477, and we respectfully urge a favorable report.

# **Sign on letter of support HB477.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maryland NOW

Position: FAV



**MARYLANDERS FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

*Ensuring reproductive freedom,  
justice, and equity for all.*

Dear members of the Maryland House of Delegates Appropriations Committee, on behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to support House Bill 477: Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements.

According to the National Library of Medicine, 61% of women who have children while enrolled in college drop out before earning a degree. The US Centers for Disease Control reports that college aged people (between 15-24 years old) account for nearly half of all STIs in the country. Despite the documented negative health and academic outcomes associated with sexual health concerns, the remarkable efforts of elected leadership, and the indefatigable advocacy of organizations across the state, most post-secondary institutions still do not prioritize preventive measures related to reproductive health and wellness. As a result, many students across Maryland lack reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of reproductive health services, STI treatment and HIV prevention.

For those folks, seeing a provider, accessing trusted information, and finding the right birth control could mean missed classes, time off from work, hours on public transportation and an egregious medical bill. Limited access to contraception, safe abortions, and other reproductive healthcare services is not only detrimental to educational success, but also promotes systemic inequality since the people who are most at risk for dropping out of college—low-income Americans and racial minorities—are also the ones who are most likely to unexpectedly become pregnant at an early age. These ethnic and socioeconomic disparities will only be exasperated if we don't take immediate action.

It is imperative that Maryland public colleges and universities take a vested interest in helping their students stay in school, graduate, and build a lifetime of opportunity by ensuring that all students have access to a full range of sexual health services as a strategic investment in their collegiate success. HB477 will ensure that policies are put in place to make that a reality.

Signed,

Marylanders for Reproductive Choice





**HB477\_USM\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: FWA



## HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

### House Bill 477

### Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements

February 14, 2023

### Favorable with Amendment

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 477. The bill requires University System of Maryland (USM) institutions to develop and implement comprehensive reproductive health services plans including referrals to off-campus health providers.

Reproductive health care is an issue that uniquely impacts college students. An unwanted or unplanned pregnancy can prevent people of both sexes from finishing school, leaving students with loan debt, no degree, and fewer pathways to career and salary advancement. Research shows many factors can prevent female college students from accessing reproductive health services, including fear of social stigmas or judgment, a lack of transportation, cost, or misinformation and distrust. The main factor preventing male college students from accessing reproductive health care, however, is a lack of knowledge about what services are available or how to access them.

The Supreme Court's Dobbs decision highlighted the importance of access to reproductive health care, including emergency contraceptives, birth control, and accurate information on preventing STDs and unwanted pregnancy for college students. It is very challenging for students to access Plan B, for example, or other forms of emergency contraception, as most college campus health centers are not stocked with it. Even the few on-campus health centers that do have emergency contraceptives have limited hours and are usually closed on weekends and holidays.

So what does a student in need of emergency contraception do to obtain it? They can try to travel off-campus to obtain it within the 24-hour time frame in which it is most effective. Unfortunately, as with many issues of accessibility, this argument overlooks and marginalizes students who might not have the financial resources to afford Plan B, don't have access to transportation to nearby pharmacies, or can't take time off from work or school to travel to these pharmacies.

The USM agrees with the intent of House Bill 477. The ability of students to access accurate information, and procure reproductive health services swiftly, is an important part of any plan. It is also important to recognize the challenge of building the capacity to recruit, train, and/or contract with community providers, as needed, to provide reproductive health services.

The USM looks forward to working with the sponsor to better focus the scope of the legislation where it can make the biggest impact. By concentrating this effort around **residential USM institutions with on-campus health facility centers**, officials can better track the readiness and efficacy of a reproductive health service plan. Additionally, updating a reproductive health

services plan annually is more work than necessary. The legislative interest and medical advancements in reproductive healthcare are ever changing and an annual reminder is unnecessary.

The main interest is to work collaboratively with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and student leaders to adopt protocols, share best practices, troubleshoot implementation issues, and review standards of care being received by providers.

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 477.

House Bill 477  
(First Reading File Bill)

Amendment No. 1

On page 1, in line 4, strike “each” and substitute “CERTAIN”, and in line 5, strike “institution” and substitute “INSTITUTIONS”.

Amendment No. 2

On page 1, in line 19, after “(A)” insert “(1)”; and after line 20, insert:

“(2) “PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION DOES NOT INCLUDE THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS.”; and

In line 21, after “(1)”, insert:

“(1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (i) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, “; and on page 2, after line 2 insert:

“(II) EXCEPT FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO OVER-THE-COUNTER CONTRACEPTION THROUGH A RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT ON CAMPUS OR A VENDING MACHINE, THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION DO NOT APPLY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE.”



### **About the University System of Maryland**

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of twelve institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards eight out of every ten bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of twenty-one members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

USM Office of Government Relations - Patrick Hogan: [phogan@usmd.edu](mailto:phogan@usmd.edu)

**Maryland Catholic Conference\_UNFAV\_HB477.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brian Barnwell

Position: UNF



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

**February 14, 2023**

**House Bill 477**

**Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Reproductive Health Services Plans  
– Requirements**

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Position: Unfavorable**

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 477** requires that on or before August 1, 2024, each public senior higher education institution, in consultation with students, shall develop and implement a reproductive health services plan to provide at the institution or to refer students to various reproductive health services. It calls for the Maryland Department of Health, on request, to provide assistance to a public senior higher education institution in developing a reproductive health services plan.

House Bill 477 specifically says it will develop and implement a reproductive health services plan to provide at public senior higher education institutions or will refer students to a comprehensive range of reproductive health services. Unfortunately, the bill does not explicitly provide any resources or referrals for students who decide to have and parent a child. In Maryland, 18 percent of all undergraduates, or 54,908 students, are parents and 25,955 college students are single mothers.<sup>1</sup> We must provide student mothers, and/or mothers to be, resources and referrals that allow them the choice to have and parent a child. Too often a student mother, and/or mother to be is forced to choose between her child and her dreams for educational attainment. We cannot let this be the case.

There is a great need to provide students with resources and referrals that reflect their choice to have a child and parent that child. Students deserve more options than abortion.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Maryland.pdf>

The Maryland Catholic Conference asks for an unfavorable report on HB 477.

Thank you for your consideration.