

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

I write to you today in **opposition** of **House Bill 477** Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements. The bill would force public colleges and universities to provide access to “reproductive care” for their students.

This bill is offensive for a number of reasons. For one thing, Colleges and Universities are designed to be institutions of higher learning. They are not designed to provide medical or social services to members of the college community. Creating taxpayer-funded “reproductive care” requirements for these institutions is a duplication of already existing services available on the market and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

I would, however, like to focus on Lines 13-15 on Page 2 of the draft copy. This section would require public colleges and universities to provide “24-HOUR ACCESS TO OVER-THE-COUNTER CONTRACEPTION THROUGH THE STUDENT HEALTH CENTER, RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS ON CAMPUS, OR VENDING MACHINES”

Hormonal Contraception prevents a potential medical danger to any individual who ingests it. This is why Hormonal Contraception is only available on a prescription basis through consultation with their doctor. Hormonal Contraception can cause a number of adverse medical impacts on women, including certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, blood clots and depression. To make such pills available over the counter would be to create a public health danger that endangers women who be accessing these pills without the care of a medical doctor.

What’s more alarming is that 24-hour access to Hormonal Contraception via a vending machine. Having such a vending machine available would mean that the individual obtaining the Hormonal Contraception or potentially an abortifacient would not be verified as a member of the campus community nor would they be verified as an individual aged 18 years or older. This could make Maryland’s public colleges and universities a hub for consequence-free access to the community at large, particularly to minors, sex workers, and sexual traffickers looking for easy access to Hormonal Contraception or abortifacients.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

How exactly will Maryland benefit if sex traffickers have the ability to provide over-the-counter hormonal drugs to their victims without the fear of consequences?

How exactly will women benefit if they are able to take hormonal-based medicines without the advice of a medical professional?

This bill is problematic to its very core. However, this bill through the creation of over-the-counter access to Hormonal Contraception is a public safety risk to Maryland's women. I urge you all to **vote yes** on **House Bill 417**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Brian Griffiths", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.