



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 477 - Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health
Services Plans – Requirements
Appropriations Committee – February 14, 2023
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0477. This bill requires each public senior higher education institution, in consultation with students, to develop and implement a comprehensive reproductive health services plan on or before August 1, 2024. This plan must cover 24-hour access to all FDA approved contraception, including emergency contraception; prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections; HIV prevention; and abortion care services. These services can be provided through the student health center, on-campus retail establishments, vending machines, or by referral to a network of off-campus providers in reasonable proximity, in which case the plan must address transportation access.

The recent U.S. Supreme Court Dobbs decision that overturned Roe v. Wade, which had guaranteed women's reproductive care rights for fifty years, makes it imperative that the state take action to protect these rights for all women. Sexually active young women are particularly vulnerable. Many college campuses have little to no access to essential reproductive healthcare resources. Young women are leading a nation-wide movement to address this need. No woman should be forced to give birth because services are unavailable – or too expensive. This bill provides for accessible, comprehensive, reproductive healthcare services, but does not address affordability. Lack of affordability can be a barrier to timely and comprehensive reproductive care.

We ask for your support for HB0477 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. However, we also ask the Committee to consider amending this bill to require each institution to address the issue of affordability in their plan.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

Ginger Macomber
WDC Advocacy Committee