



UNFAVORABLE

**HB 380 - Criminal Law - Prohibition on Sale of Contraceptives and Contraceptive Devices
by Vending Machine in School – Repeal**

Laura Bogley, JD
Executive Director
Maryland Right to Life, Inc.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and chapters across the state, we strongly object to HB380, which would put young children at great risk of injury, death and sexual abuse. This bill would recklessly repeal the criminal prohibition on selling contraception and abortion-inducing drugs in elementary school vending machines. By enacting this bill into law, the Assembly would force kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools and high schools to become part of the abortion drug manufacturer distribution chain using taxpayer funds.

The criminal code defines sexual intercourse with a child as felony rape. Children do not need access to contraceptive drugs but instead to adult supervision and protection. Children do not possess the mental or emotional competency to either consent to sexual activity or make medical decisions regarding their reproductive health.

The State would be grossly negligent in permitting “contraceptive” and abortifacient drugs to be sold out of elementary and high school vending machines, thereby authorizing school personnel to evade their duty as Mandatory Reporters of suspected sexual abuse of a child as well as enabling sexual predators, rapists and pedophiles to evade prosecution under the law and continue to abuse their child victims.

SCHOOLS ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Under Maryland law, educators and school health providers are MANDATORY REPORTERS of suspected child abuse, including child sexual abuse. According to the Maryland Department of Human Services, incidents are to be reported as soon as they are suspected and waiting for proof may involve grave risk to the child and impede services to the family.

School nurses and counselors receive training about how to identify suspected child abuse in students and intervene on the child’s behalf. By imposing contraceptive and abortifacient drugs on schoolchildren through vending machines, this bill would undermine the role of school health providers as Mandatory Reporters. Instead, this bill would enable educators and school personnel to evade their duty as Mandatory Reporters of abuse, putting children at grave risk of harm.

This bill would prevent children suffering abuse from receiving critical intervention and protection from trusted school personnel. In no case should any child enduring sexual abuse and assault, be neglected by school personnel and left to fend for themselves by purchasing contraceptives or abortifacients out of



vending machines at school. If this is the State's solution to child sexual abuse, the State is complicit in the victimization of our children.

KNOWN HEALTH RISKS OF CONTRACEPTIVE DRUGS

This bill would allow the distribution of contraceptive and abortifacient drugs to minor girls through elementary and high school vending machines, depriving them of critical medical advice through a trusted healthcare provider and causing great risk to children's health. So-called contraceptive drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), include the minipill or "**Opill**" and emergency contraception pills also known as "morning after" pills and have known harmful side effects including death. The FDA requires drug manufacturers to disclose these side effects to users. However, children are incapable of understanding or giving informed consent to these health risks.

The Opill is newly approved by the FDA for over the counter (OTC) use. It contains norgestrel which is the synthetic form of progestin. The Opill is a 0.075mg pill taken once per day every day. The pill advertises that it can prevent ovulation, or thicken cervical mucus to prevent sperm from reaching the egg. The pill also is intended to thin the uterine lining to prevent implantation within the uterus of a newly created human being in his or her zygote stage of life, which results in an early termination of pregnancy otherwise known as an ABORTION.

Emergency contraception pills are taken as a one-dose pill after sex. The emergency contraception pill contains 1.5 mg norgestrel, which is 20 times the dose of the daily Opill taken all in one dose. It is important to note that if girls have access to these drugs through vending machines without adult supervision or medical guidance, they could potentially overdose and experience serious health problems.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the health risks of contraceptive drugs include liver problems, ectopic pregnancy and severe allergic reaction. Ectopic pregnancy is a medical emergency that often requires surgery. Ectopic pregnancies can cause serious internal bleeding, infertility, and even death. The likelihood of those risks increases through frequent use, such as use after every sexual encounter or when combined use with high-doses of hormone as contained in emergency contraceptive drugs. There also are known contraindications with other drugs that can render contraceptives ineffective.

ABORTIFACIENTS MISLABELED AS "CONTRACEPTION"

While Maryland Right to Life takes no position on family planning methods and devices that truly prevent conception of a new human life, we strongly oppose misinformation and taxpayer funding for abortifacients mislabeled as contraceptives. Abortifacients drugs and devices, do not prevent conception or fertilization that results in the creation of a unique human life. Instead, abortifacients disrupt the continuation of human gestation, resulting in the death of the new human life.



Since 1827, we've had reasonable knowledge that human life begins when sperm and egg unite, creating a distinct, living individual. That was confirmed beyond reasonable doubt in 1876, when Oscar Hertwig observed the first union of sperm and egg in animals. Then in 1965, to influence people to accept "the pill," the American College of Gynecologists (ACOG) made a political decision—not a scientific one—to redefine conception. ([Exposing ACOG: How abortion and population control enthusiasts redefined the beginning of life](#)) ACOG's definition of when conception begins was not when the child's life actually begins, but when the already alive and growing child implants in the uterus. ACOG's opinion is scientifically incorrect, pretending nothing happens between fertilization and implantation. This twisting of scientific fact to fit political agendas has led to mass confusion on the topic and the shameless manipulation of women for profit.

Maryland law does not require sex education to be medically accurate nor age appropriate and it is neither. This is a result of intense lobbying by abortion-invested special interests like Planned Parenthood, which is one of the leading providers of sexuality education curriculum. Due to this intentional miseducation of our youth, many young women are made dependent on hormonal birth control without understanding the long term effects on their health. Contraceptive drugs are reported to cause various side effects, including increased risk of infertility, miscarriage and cancer. Women also experience psychological and emotional trauma when they learn that they were unknowingly using abortifacients, resulting in the premature deaths of multiple children throughout their childbearing years.

Maryland Right to Life defends the right to know of every woman, to be provided the scientific facts that many contraceptive methods endanger a woman's health and induce an early abortion, rather than prevent conception in order to give truly informed consent before utilizing these abortifacients. Again, children do not have the mental or emotional capacity to consent to sexual activity and that is why the distribution of contraceptive drugs in elementary and secondary schools must remain criminally prohibited.

Maryland Right to Life will advocate for the right of conscience of any individual, organization or institution to refuse to use, pay for or administer any contraceptive methods that may have an abortifacient effect. The State of Maryland's forced taxation for the purposes of abortion and abortifacients is unconstitutional and inhumane.

For these reasons, we urge you to protect Maryland schoolchildren from known health risks and sexual abuse by issuing an unfavorable report on House Bill 380 and the distribution of contraceptive drugs through elementary and secondary school vending machines.