
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 380

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

Judiciary Committee
February 4, 2025

Social Work Advocates for Social Change supports HB 380, which will repeal the prohibition and criminal penalty on the sale of certain contraceptives and contraceptive devices through vending machines or other automatic devices in schools, including kindergartens, nursery schools, and elementary or secondary schools. This legislation promotes student health and well-being by enabling accessibility, reducing financial barriers, and protecting privacy and autonomy.

Promoting access to contraceptives is crucial in enabling students to make healthy decisions about their reproductive health. HB 380 would allow schools to provide students with the necessary tools to make informed choices, which contributes to the prevention of unintended pregnancies and reduction of spreading sexually transmitted infections or diseases. In tandem, contraceptive education equips students with the knowledge to make healthy choices.¹ **Removing the existing prohibition would give schools and parents the ability to determine how best to empower students to prioritize their health and safety.**²

Students from lower-income backgrounds face financial obstacles when accessing sexual health resources. **HB 380 gives communities and schools a potential tool to address these disparities by making contraceptives more accessible, benefiting students and families.** Insurance coverage for contraceptives is not always comprehensive,³ and limited pharmacy availability due to restrictive hours or supply shortages further exacerbates the issue.⁴ This legislation would allow communities and schools to determine whether making contraceptives available through automatic devices such as vending machines would help meet the needs of their young people.

Many students hesitate to seek contraceptives in person due to fears of judgment, shame, or embarrassment. **HB 380 would allow schools and communities to mitigate these concerns by enabling discreet access through vending machines and other**

¹ Pazol, K., Zapata, L. B., Tregear, S. J., Mautone-Smith, N., & Gavin, L. E. (2015). Impact of Contraceptive Education on Contraceptive Knowledge and Decision Making: A Systematic Review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(2 Suppl 1), S46-S56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2015.03.031>

² American Academy of Pediatrics. (2024, February 15). *The importance of access to comprehensive sex education*. <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/adolescent-sexual-health/equitable-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health-care-for-all-youth/the-importance-of-access-to-comprehensive-sex-education/>

³ Perrin, E. C., & Davidson, L. L. (2019). *Sexual health in adolescents and young adults: The importance of comprehensive sexual education*. *Journal of Pediatrics and Adolescent Gynecology*, 32(5), 598-603. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpjag.2019.05.001>

⁴ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2015, January). *Access to contraception*. Committee Opinion No. 615. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2015/01/access-to-contraception>

automated devices. This aligns with Title X protections ensuring privacy for minors.⁵ In Maryland, colleges and universities have implemented *Senate Bill 527*, which requires plans for student access to over-the-counter contraceptives.⁶ Institutions like Salisbury University have reported success with these initiatives, emphasizing confidentiality in every transaction.⁷ By removing the need for face-to-face interaction, this bill fosters a non-judgmental environment where individuals can seek health resources without stigma.

HB 380 represents a crucial step toward creating more equitable opportunities for all students and families. By expanding communities' and schools' ability to determine whether and how to promote access to contraceptives, this legislation enhances public health, promotes informed decision-making, and reduces systemic barriers, ultimately fostering a safer and healthier community for all.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on HB 380.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

⁵ National Center for Youth Law. (2023, May 25). *Federal Title X family planning program: Privacy and access rules for adolescents*. National Center for Youth Law.

<https://youthlaw.org/news/federal-title-x-family-planning-program-privacy-and-access-rules-adolescents>

⁶ Maryland General Assembly. (2024). *Chapter 338 - Senate Bill 527: Community Colleges - Contraception - Access Requirements*.

https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024rs/Chapters_noln/CH_338_sb0527t.pdf

⁷ Salisbury University. (2024, February 19). *New SU Wellness-to-Go vending machine offers 24/7 options for students*. Salisbury University. <https://www.salisbury.edu/news/article/2024-2-19-New-SU-Wellness-to-Go-Vending-Machine-Offers-247-Options-for-Students>