



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 4, 2025

House Bill 380

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

Position: Unfavorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) 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 380 repeals the prohibition on and criminal penalty related to the sale of certain contraceptives and contraceptive devices by means of a vending machine or other automatic device at a kindergarten, nursery school, or elementary or secondary school.

Vending machines dispensing contraceptives and contraceptive devices are neither safe nor appropriate for schools, especially in settings such as kindergartens, nursery schools, elementary schools, and secondary schools. Schools are not intended to serve as distribution points for these products, which are already readily available through pharmacies, clinics, and online retailers. Young children do not require access to contraceptives.

The risks associated with such vending machines are significant. Misuse of contraceptive devices has led to serious injuries and even fatalities among children due to horseplay or lack of supervision. Without oversight, these machines could encourage unsafe practices and inappropriate behavior. Children often test boundaries, and the presence of vending machines in schools could facilitate reckless use. In 2018, for example, a social media challenge involving contraceptive devices led to incidents of asphyxiation, prompting warnings from healthcare providers.¹ To prioritize student safety and well-being, contraceptive vending machines should not be placed in schools. Instead of solely promoting contraceptive use, legislation should focus on education of natural reproductive health while emphasizing moral responsibility, acceptance, and respect to life.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2018/04/02/in-case-you-missed-the-condom-snorting-challenge-and-didnt-know-its-a-bad-idea/>

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for an unfavorable report on **HB 380**.

Thank you for your consideration.