



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill (HB) 380 – Criminal Law – Prohibition on Sale of Contraceptives and Contraceptive Devices by Vending Machine in School – Repeal – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Clippinger and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 380 – Criminal Law – Prohibition on Sale of Contraceptives and Contraceptive Devices by Vending Machine in School – Repeal. HB 380 repeals the prohibition of, and the criminal penalties for, selling contraceptives through vending machines or automatic devices in certain schools.

Criminal penalties for providing evidence-based contraception create unnecessary barriers that threaten access to an essential public health resource in Maryland. These penalties perpetuate stigma around contraceptive use and hinder access. Decriminalizing the sale of contraceptives through vending machines in schools normalizes their use and prioritizes health education and prevention rather than punitive measures. This action aligns with Maryland's public health priorities of reducing unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections while fostering an environment that supports informed and responsible decision-making without fear of legal repercussions.

Research shows that providing condoms in high schools does not prompt increased sexual activity among teens but instead encourages condom use among sexually active students, particularly among those at high risk. When contraception is more widely available, students are more likely to use it, leading to improved sexual health outcomes.¹ Sexual health relies on ensuring contraception and disease prevention tools are accessible, acceptable, and consistently used. HB 380 advances this public health goal by removing current barriers.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

¹ Algur E, Wang E, Friedman HS, Deperthes B. A systematic global review of condom availability programs in high schools. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2019 Mar 1;64(3):292-304. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.11.013

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary