

Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

I'm writing to submit my written testimony in strong support of HB53, The Minors Contraceptive Consent Bill.

I support this bill, first and foremost, because I am a parent in the state of Maryland. Parents are the most invested, the most informed, the most competent individuals to care for children and guide their decisions regarding healthcare. In particular, contraceptive implants confer potential long-term risks which minors are simply not equipped to evaluate adequately. Internal contraceptive devices can cause side effects which parents are not able to recognize, much less address, if they don't know their children have even received an implant. Minors are neither mentally and emotionally prepared to evaluate risks and benefits of such procedures, and may also be unaware of aspects of their medical history which rule them out as candidates for internal contraceptive devices.

Minors are not legally allowed to vote, to smoke, or consent to any other invasive medical procedure. These kids are not able to give fully informed consent, nor do they necessarily know the details of their own medical history. It's inappropriate to place the burden of medical decision making on minors who can't possibly consider all the consequences. If this precedent is set, what other medical decisions might the state take away from parents? Over 50% of children in the U.S., including Maryland, have a serious chronic health condition. One in sixty children in Maryland (2%) are on the autism spectrum. One in six children in the U.S. has a developmental disability and that number is rising. Healthcare providers administering medical procedures may not recognize these disabilities in high functioning children with special needs. How can these children give consent to invasive medical procedures without parental guidance?

The Supreme Court ruled in 1979: "Most children, even in adolescence, simply are not able to make sound judgements concerning many decisions, including their need for medical care or treatment. Parents can and must make those judgements."(<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/442/584.html>)

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Best regards,  
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