



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER**

February 14, 2024
Senator Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 527 Two-Year College Institutions – Reproductive Health Services Access

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Feldman, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I am writing to ask for your support of SB 527 — Two-Year College Institutions – Reproductive Health Services Access. The 2023 General Assembly voted to require four-year colleges and institutions provide access to emergency contraception, like via vending machines. This bill expands that requirement to two-year colleges and institutions increasing access.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women advocates for legislation that promotes the equal and full participation of women and girls in every aspect of community living and access to education, healthcare, and work advancement with political and economic power. Body autonomy is foundational for equal and full participation in all facets of society. Access to emergency contraceptives is critical to maintaining that autonomy, as well as vital to the health of the community.

The proposed legislation ensures equitable access to emergency contraceptives for community college students, who are more likely to be uninsured, and come from lower-income families compared to students at four-year colleges. Additionally, easy, on-campus access to emergency contraceptives would negate some of the difficulties and inequalities this population experiences when trying to acquire emergency contraceptives, such as pharmacy hours, transportation issues, cultural norms/stigmas which may make accessing contraceptives difficult, or denial of services. Ready access to emergency contraceptives has the potential to make it easier for students to complete their education. Child Trend found that 62% of community college students who had children after enrolling did not finish their degree. Therefore, I urge a favorable report on SB 527.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Elizabeth Richards
Member, Policy & Legislative Committee
Montgomery County Commission for Women