

March 9, 2026

Written Testimony from Upstream USA

Senate Bill 0532

Higher Education Institutions - Over-the-Counter Contraception - Access and Reporting

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Upstream USA welcomes the opportunity to submit comments regarding Senate Bill 0532, which would bolster existing contraceptive access laws by requiring regular reporting and a consistent supply of over-the-counter (OTC) contraception on community college and university campuses in Maryland.

Upstream is a national nonprofit whose mission is to ensure that patient-centered contraceptive care is basic, primary healthcare. We provide free training and technical assistance to healthcare organizations across the country, supporting their ability to provide high-quality, accessible birth control counseling and care. In 2022, Upstream launched a multi-year partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and have since partnered with 11 healthcare organizations across 61 sites.

In the last few years, Maryland has passed legislation ensuring access to OTC contraception at universities and colleges, but a few implementation gaps remain. Currently, community colleges are required to ensure access to some but not all three types of FDA-approved OTC contraception - condoms, emergency contraception, and the OTC pill - and they must report on their efforts to achieve this goal to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Conversely, universities are required to ensure access to all types of OTC contraception, but are not required to report on their activities to MHEC. Senate Bill 0532 would address these inconsistencies in the current law, introducing consistent reporting and supplying requirements for all higher education entities.

Research has shown that women's ability to decide if and when to have children is strongly linked to their academic performance and ability to complete college.¹ According to a 2024 Survey conducted by the National College Health Association, 52% of students reported having vaginal sex in the past year, and 1 in 5 of those students report not using any form of contraception.² Providing students with a range of accessible birth control options offers them the opportunity to plan their reproductive and academic lives.

¹ Sonfield, A., Hasstedt, K., Kavanaugh, M., & Anderson, R. (2013, March). The Social and Economic Benefits of Women's Ability To Determine Whether and When to Have Children. Guttmacher.

²American College Health Association. (2024). UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT Reference Group .



In passing this bill, Maryland would build on existing policy supports to ensure timely and affordable access to contraception for students across the state.

Thank you,

Sarah Legried
Senior Manager of Policy & Government Affairs
Upstream USA