



**Testimony for the House Health and Government Operations Committee  
March 14, 2018**

**HB 1111 - Public Health - Access to Emergency Contraception –  
Student Health Centers and Vending Machines**

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**SUPPORT**

The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 1111, which increases access to emergency contraception on college campuses. This measure will help to promote women’s health and reproductive rights.

Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended.<sup>1</sup> For the women who face a potential unintended pregnancy, widespread and timely access to emergency contraception is critical. Emergency contraception (EC) is contraception that is taken after unprotected intercourse – that is, where contraception failed, was not used, or in instances of sexual assault. Emergency contraception must be taken within 72-120 hours, but most experts agree that it is more effective the sooner it is taken.<sup>2</sup> This narrow window makes ready access to emergency contraception critical. In many instances, unprotected sex occurs at night or over the weekend, when pharmacies or doctors’ offices may not be open.

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At Maryland colleges and universities, students may face barriers in accessing EC, including scheduling required health center appointments, being charged appointment fees, inaccessible transportation to access the pharmacy or clinic, and facing unnecessary age restrictions. This bill will substantially decrease these barriers for students. HB 1111 would 1) require student health centers to stock EC, and offering students contraceptive counseling or referrals to qualified health care providers, 2) ensure 24/7 availability of EC on their campuses through vending machines or other methods, as an alternative to the health centers which are not open 24/7, 3) require posted information on the school website and other communication modes about the availability of EC on- and off-campus, and 4) provide consumer-friendly information on the effective use of EC.

HB 1111 ensures that students have the opportunity to access EC on-campus in a way that is fast, convenient, and sensitive to the real-life needs of students.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge you to issue a favorable report for HB 1111.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley K. Henshaw, *Unintended Pregnancy in the United States*, 30 Fam. Plan. Persp. 24, 26 (1998).

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Ellertson et al., *Extending the Time Limit for Starting the Yuzpe Regimen of Emergency Contraception to 120 Hours*, 101 Obstet. Gynecol. 1168, 1168 (2003).