

Jean Barbour  
Falmouth  
LD 217

Dear Senator Rafferty, Senator Pierce, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am in strong support of LD 217, An Act to Require Schools to Provide Access to Free Condoms for Students in Grade 9 to 12 in the School Nurse's Office. As a school nurse for the last 23 years, I've witnessed the complexities of adolescents navigating sexual reproductive health information and decision-making in their early years. I strongly believe that making condoms available to students, along with comprehensive sexual health education, will help reduce unintended pregnancies and the spread of transmitted infections.

The latest data from the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey shows that 52.5% of Maine students are sexually active by Grade 12, and of sexually active students, approximately half used a condom during their last sexual encounter (MIYHS). Additionally, 48.2% of reported cases of STIs occur in adolescent and young adult populations (CDC). For more than a decade, the American Academy of Pediatrics has publicly supported condom access in programs in school and community settings to address this public health need (AAP).

I support LD 217, and also request that committee members amend the bill to make it more equitable and impactful (to schools without a full time nurse) by changing the language to say "that condoms can be accessed in the school nurse's office or locations authorized by the school nurse".

I urge you and the committee to vote Yes on LD 217. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jean M. Barbour