

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of **LD 217**, *An Act to Require Schools to Provide Access to Free Condoms for Students in Grades 9 to 12 in the School Nurse's Office*.

I am a teacher at a public high school. Several students in my career have come to me telling me about a possible pregnancy or scare. While I have directed them to an appropriate resource at the school, such as counselors and nurses, I also shared with them the clinics closest to their homes. I encouraged them to seek out condoms for free in these clinics since they were not available at school. Students had told me that they hadn't used a condom because they didn't have one on hand and they are too expensive. Cost and proper education is a barrier for students. We have a duty to provide a safe choice for students.

I also request that committee members amend the bill to make it more equitable and impactful 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 the Committee to vote YES on LD 217.

Thank you,
A South Portland HS Teacher