

April 13, 2025

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Representative Kelly Noonan Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

I am Katrin Teel of Glenburn, Maine. I am here to testify in opposition to L.D. 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.

It is not the role of the school to provide students in grades 9 to 12 with condoms free of charge via the school nurse. It is the right of parents, not schools, to decide whether their teenage children should have access to contraception.

Many parents may not think their adolescent children are ready physically or emotionally for sex. Having condoms available in the high school puts undo pressure on vulnerable teens to consider having a sexual relationship that is too premature.

Additionally, this policy interferes with the family and religious beliefs; it infringes on a family's timeline for discussion with their children regarding sex and/or religious beliefs.

Providing condoms also sends a mixed message. On one hand, schools may teach students to think for themselves. Yet on the other, it may send an erroneous message that the school is expecting them to be sexually active. Furthermore, teenage girls have less control over condom use than teenage boys, thus creating an inequality that the school sanctions.

In closing, it is the responsibility of the family, not the school, to educate their teen regarding issues around sex. This bill usurps that authority and is a clear overreach of government and public funds. Toward that end, I strongly encourage you to vote no on L.D. 217. Thank you for allowing me to contribute my testimony.