

Good afternoon, Chair Rogers, Minority Vice Chair VanderWall, and members of the committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share my commentary about HB 5435, HB 5436, and HB 5013. My name is Julia, and I am a first-year law student. I plan to pursue a career in reproductive rights law to help protect vulnerable patients and providers.

I would like to share a short anecdote concerning the importance of accessible contraceptives in my own life. I started the pill when I was a high school student. In high-school, I was active in local politics, I figure skated competitively, and maintained a rigorous school course load. Like many of my peers, this schedule meant very long days, so the monthly task of refilling my prescription was tedious and I often forgot until the very last minute. As I transitioned into college life, the monthly refills, along the fact that the pill began causing me nausea, ultimately motivated me to opt for a new form of birth control.

I was very fortunate that I had the opportunity with relative ease, to transition to a new form of birth control, however, this is not the case for many of my fellow student peers. Throughout my time as a student reproductive rights advocate at MSU, I have spoken to many students about the barriers to accessing contraceptives. Students encounter unique barriers to contraceptives. For example, they lack transportation, they struggle with costs of contraceptives, and the added stigma associated with reproductive healthcare resources.

HB 5435 and HB 5436 would be critical to students who encounter barriers to getting in with a primary care provider. According to a [2022](#) study, the average wait time for an appointment with a primary care physician is 26 days, however, anecdotally MSU students have encountered wait times anywhere from 30 days to three months. This legislation helps to mitigate the logistical burdens associated with attaining a script from a physician, such as scheduling appointments, taking time off work, missing class, travel time, and more.

Students should be able to make the decision that is best for their own sexual and reproductive healthcare. Challenging barriers to contraceptives is critical for students to make and exercise informed, independent decisions about their own bodies and reproduction. This legislation is a key step towards the goal of broadening access to healthcare across our state.

Thank you very much.