



# REPRODUCTIVE EQUITY NOW

**Testimony before the Joint Committee on Financial Services  
Supporting *An Act advancing contraceptive coverage and economic  
security in our state (S.499/H.536)***

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Good morning Chairman Eldridge, Chairman Michlewitz, and members of the Joint Committee on Financial Services. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit this testimony.

My name is Rebecca Hart Holder and I am the Executive Director of Reproductive Equity Now, a statewide grassroots organization with more than 10,000 members dedicated to promoting full and equal access to reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancies; choosing safe, legal abortion; and bearing healthy children.

**On behalf of Reproductive Equity Now, I respectfully urge you to report out favorably S.499/H.536, *An Act advancing contraceptive coverage and economic security in our state*, sponsored by Senator Chandler and Representatives Haddad and Scibak.**

Contraception is basic, preventative healthcare that every woman should be able to access. As you all know, the Affordable Care Act established a mandate requiring coverage for preventive services, including contraception, without cost-sharing. Over the last few months, we have repeatedly teetered on the edge of losing these basic protections for women to control their own bodies and their own family planning as Republicans in Congress have attempted to repeal the ACA. Here is a less-known fact: Even if we successfully prevent the Congressional repeal of the Affordable Care Act, bay-staters are still at risk of losing their federally-protected right to accessible birth control through the Interim Final Rule Process.

The Interim Final Rule currently being considered by the Trump administration would let employers decline to cover birth control for their employees if they state a religious or moral objection. Currently, employers can already opt out of covering birth control on religious grounds. Widening the loophole to include morality, which is not defined in the IFR, would allow an employer to opt out for any reason whatsoever. Simply put, a woman's

boss could now interfere with her most basic and personal of decisions – when and whether to become a parent.

Bay-stater's lives cannot continue to rest on the changing moods of one or two US senators who know nothing about Massachusetts and its residents. That is why we need *An Act advancing contraceptive coverage and economic security in our state*. This legislation, also known as the ACCESS bill, would codify the ACA's guarantee that all birth control methods be available without copay. California, Maryland, Illinois, and Vermont already have similar laws. Passing the ACCESS bill would guarantee that Massachusetts can continue to lead the nation in reducing unintended pregnancies and improving healthcare reform by ensuring every woman has access to the no-cost birth control option that works best for her.

I respectfully ask that this bill receive a favorable report.

Thank you for your time. If I can answer any of your questions about this bill, please contact me at [name@nameoforg.org](mailto:name@nameoforg.org) or (###)###-####.