



Support SB171 for expanded access to safe and effective birth control.

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EXPLAINER

Support SB171: Pharmacist-Prescribed Birth Control

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The Opportunity

Connecticut lawmakers have an opportunity to expand access to contraception for women across the state through SB171. This bill, which implements a pharmacist-prescribing model for contraception similar to those in 25 other states and Washington, D.C., would remove a barrier to birth control access and make use of systems that already exist to support patients. The R Street Institute—a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research organization focused on free markets and limited, effective government—supports measures that deregulate the healthcare space and improve health access across the country.

The Pharmacy Access Model

In this model, pharmacists can elect to complete a short, advanced educational program that will allow them to offer birth control prescriptions at the pharmacy counter. When a patient wants to use this service, they simply have to walk into their local pharmacy, fill out the same health questionnaire they would receive in a doctor's office, and—if no contraindications are noted—they can walk out with their first dose. This is unlike the regular prescribing method in which patients have to go to their doctor, receive a written prescription and then go to the pharmacy. Streamlining the process increases convenience and the likelihood that a patient will receive the birth control they need in a timely manner.

Pharmacist Prescribing of Birth Control Is Safe

The pharmacy access model is supported by major health organizations such as [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#).

Other States Have Had Positive Outcomes

Early reviews of this model in other states have yielded [promising results](#). In [Oregon](#), for example, pharmacist-prescribed birth control has led to fewer unintended pregnancies and more birth control prescriptions issued overall than before the model was introduced. This program has also saved Oregon \$1.6 million in the first two years due to fewer unintended pregnancies.

Cost Savings

In 2017, [38 percent](#) of all pregnancies in Connecticut were unintentional. This resulted in over [\\$80 million](#) in associated health care costs to the state. Reducing unintended pregnancies can significantly undercut these costs and save money in the short and long term, but not just for the state. Women and their families can also save financially from having pharmacy access to birth control prescriptions.