



The undersigned organizations support the introduction of “The Orally-Taken Contraception (OTC) Act” by U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks. This bill directs the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue guidelines specifically for drug manufacturers who make prescription oral contraceptives that may be suitable for over-the-counter availability.

This is an important step toward creating an over-the-counter market for birth control in the United States. In over [100 countries](#) across the world, many methods of hormonal birth control are already available over the counter. Yet the United States has stalled in modernizing avenues of access to birth control, even though the medical community at large supports lowering the prescription barrier. Groups such as the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) and the [American Medical Association](#) have all publicly supported over-the-counter access to contraception due to its time-tested safety and efficacy. These groups also support over-the-counter birth control because [studies have demonstrated](#) that women are capable of using self-screening tools to determine their eligibility for these drugs; a doctor’s visit is not needed. This bill would speed up the process for getting birth control pills on pharmacy shelves.

For any drug to become available without a prescription, it must meet the FDA’s [rigorous standards](#) for both safety and efficacy. However, the FDA process to ensure these standards are met is often opaque, making it time-consuming and costly for would-be applicants. Under the OTC Act, the FDA would streamline this process by issuing guidelines on oral contraceptives to lessen the burden on manufacturers seeking to apply.

The R Street Institute has long supported over-the-counter access to oral contraceptives, and [we have studied](#) the potential for an over-the-counter market for birth control pills to lower costs and increase access for consumers. Birth control access is associated with a number of positive [individual](#) and [societal](#) outcomes, such as higher education attainment and family incomes and lower divorce rates. Researchers have also found that making birth control available over the counter could reduce unintended pregnancy by [7 to 25 percent](#). Beyond that, women in the United States have long reported [wanting over-the-counter](#) birth control options. With the OTC Act, we are one step closer to meeting women where they are when it comes to planning for their families and lives.