



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Public Health
In Support of S.1470/H.2399 An Act to require public universities to provide medication abortion
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Ensuring a basic level of quality health care to every U.S. resident is a League of Women Voters' goal. Specifically, the League supports access to reproductive health care, including abortion and contraception, and believes in public funding for these services for those who cannot afford them.

Medication abortion is a safe and highly effective non-surgical method of terminating pregnancy no later than the first 10 weeks of gestation. The procedure was approved by the FDA in 2000 and has a record of success 99.6% of the time. Forty percent of abortions in Massachusetts provided in the first 8 weeks are medication abortions.

It is in the best interest of the Commonwealth that those who want an abortion can access services easily and as early in the pregnancy as possible. For young people who choose to terminate a pregnancy, getting that care can help them continue their education, succeed in their studies and achieve their other life plans.

Unfortunately, access to services is an enormous obstacle for many students. Navigating the health care system outside the university and getting transportation can cause care to be delayed. Medication abortion is no longer an option after 10 weeks, and the more costly and complicated care required may be out of reach.

S.1470/H.2399 directly addresses these problems. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 3,000 members in 47 local Leagues across the state from the Berkshires to Cape Cod, supports this bill for that reason.

Extensive research shows that births resulting from unintended pregnancies are, according to the Guttmacher Institute, linked "to adverse maternal and child health outcomes and myriad social and economic challenges." These consequences include low birth weight, increased risk of postpartum depression, parental stress and potential behavioral issues. Nearly half of U.S. pregnancies are unintended (United Health Foundation, 2021) and more prevalent among low-income women and those with low educational attainment.

The availability of medication abortion services on public university campuses will allow students to remain focused on their studies, helping to improve academic success. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts believes that all people, including students, should be able to decide when and if they choose to have a family. By ensuring the provision of medication abortion services on campus, this bill eliminates logistical and financial barriers and allows students to exercise an important constitutional right.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our position. We urge the Joint Committee to report this bill favorably and provide important support to students in our public universities.