



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

October 3, 2017

Honorable James B. Eldridge, Chair
Joint Committee on Financial Services
Statehouse Room 320
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
Joint Committee on Financial Services
Statehouse Room 254
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Eldridge and Michlewitz,

We write today to provide testimony in support of S.499 and H.536, *An Act Relative to Advancing Contraceptive Coverage and Economic Security in Our State*, and to request your support for compromise language we will be providing today that has been endorsed by reproductive rights advocates as well as the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans and Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA.

In 2010, the Center for Disease Control placed birth control on its top ten list of public health achievements in the last century. However, this achievement was not equally accessible to all: Prior to the enactment of the 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA), high co-pays and out-of-pocket costs made contraception prohibitively expensive to many women. Therefore, before the ACA, women's access to contraception was significantly limited, and, by extension, so was their ability to exercise control over their lives.

Under the ACA, 1.4 million women in Massachusetts and over 55 million women nationwide of all socioeconomic backgrounds have been given access to affordable contraception that fits their lives. This has helped to place women on a more equal footing with men, effectively allowing them to plan the direction that their lives and families take. In spite of all this, President Trump, through executive order, stands poised to weaken or remove the ACA's contraceptive coverage requirement leaving an extraordinary number of women stranded in the process.

The impact of no-cost-sharing birth control has been remarkable: from 2011 to 2014, the percentage of contraception claims with cost sharing decreased from 98% to 6.5%, and average out of pocket spending dropped by 89%. However, the progress that has been made is now under severe threat and we must act to prevent the federal government from doing untold damage to the 1.4 million women in Massachusetts who have benefitted from the contraceptive protections of

the ACA.

An Act Relative to Advancing Contraceptive Coverage and Economic Security in Our State not only protects Massachusetts women from the ravages of the Trump presidency and a federal government intent on rolling back contraceptive access, but it also builds on the ACA by filling in the gaps in coverage to ensure that *all* women can access the form of birth control that works for them without a copay. This bill will give women far greater control over their lives by allowing them to directly choose the form of contraception they most prefer instead of being forced to try one form of contraception before moving onto another form. The legislation leaves the decision of which birth control is best for a woman up to her and her doctor, rather than insurance companies. Finally, this bill creates a mechanism that will allow women to access emergency contraception over-the-counter with no co-pay.

Massachusetts can and must take a stand against the encroachment upon women's rights, and be a guiding light to other state legislatures to advance women's ability to exert control over their lives. For that reason, we request that the Committee give a favorable report to S.499 and H.536, *An Act Relative to Advancing Contraceptive Coverage and Economic Security in Our State*.

Sincerely,



Harriette L. Chandler
State Senator
1st Worcester District



Michael J. Barrett
State Senator
3rd Middlesex District



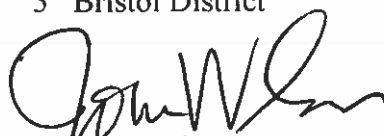
Sonia Chang-Diaz
State Senator
2nd Suffolk District



Cynthia S. Creem
State Senator
1st Middlesex and Norfolk Districts



Patricia A. Haddad
State Representative
5th Bristol District



John W. Scibak
State Representative
2nd Hampshire District



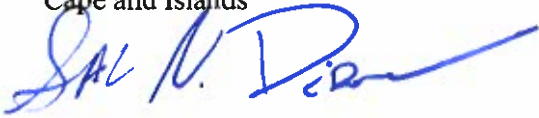
Ruth B. Balsler
State Representative
12th Middlesex District



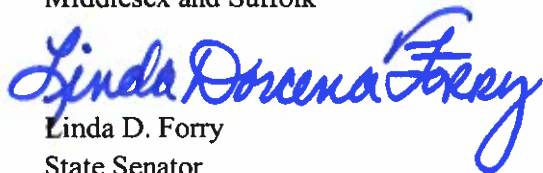
Christine P. Barber
State Representative
34th Middlesex District



Julian Cyr
State Senator
Cape and Islands



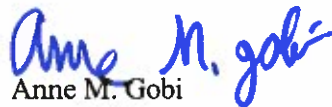
Sal. D. DiDomenico
State Senator
Middlesex and Suffolk



Linda D. Forry
State Senator
1st Suffolk District



Cindy F. Friedman
State Senator
4th Middlesex District



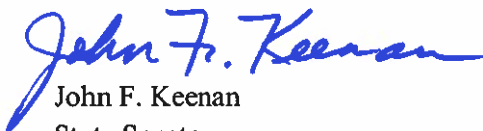
Anne M. Gobi
State Senator
Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex



Adam G. Hinds
State Senator
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Patricia D. Jehlen
State Senator
2nd Middlesex District



John F. Keenan
State Senator
Norfolk and Plymouth



Jennifer E. Benson
State Representative
37th Middlesex District



Gerard Cassidy
State Representative
9th Plymouth District



Mike Connolly
State Representative
26th Middlesex District



Daniel M. Donahue
State Representative
16th Worcester District



Carolyn C. Dykema
State Representative
8th Middlesex District



Tricia Farley-Bouvier
State Representative
3rd Berkshire District



Dylan Fernandes
State Representative
Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket



Ann-Margaret Ferrante
State Representative
5th Essex District



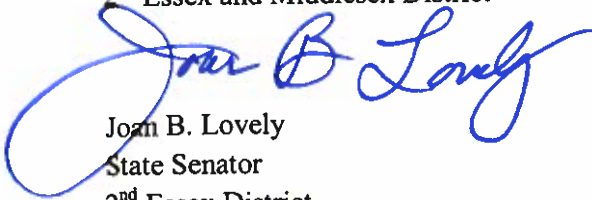
Eric P. Lesser
State Senator
1st Hampden and Hampshire Districts



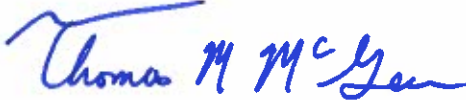
Jason M. Lewis
State Senator
5th Middlesex District



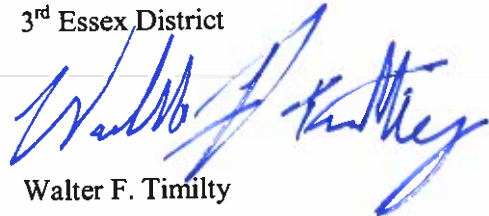
Barbara A. L'Italien
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2nd Essex and Middlesex District



Joan B. Lovely
State Senator
2nd Essex District



Thomas M. McGee
State Senator
3rd Essex District



Walter F. Timilty
State Senator
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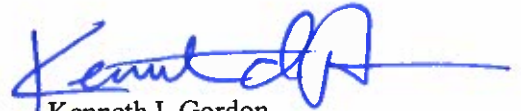
Carole A. Fiola
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6th Bristol District



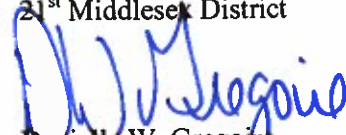
Carmine L. Gentile
State Representative
13th Middlesex District



Solomon Goldstein-Rose
State Representative
3rd Hampshire District



Kenneth I. Gordon
State Representative
21st Middlesex District



Danielle W. Gregoire
State Representative
4th Middlesex District



Natalie Higgins
State Representative
4th Worcester District



Kate Hogan
State Representative
3rd Middlesex District



Louis L. Kafka
State Representative
8th Norfolk District



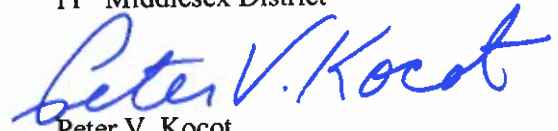
Jay R. Kaufman
State Representative
15th Middlesex District



Mary B. Keefe
State Representative
15th Worcester District



Kay Khan
State Representative
11th Middlesex District



Peter V. Kocot
State Representative
1st Hampshire District



Stephen Kulik
State Representative
1st Franklin District



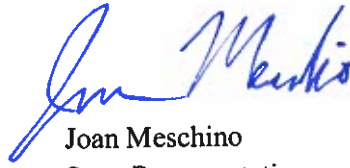
Jack Lewis
State Representative
7th Middlesex District



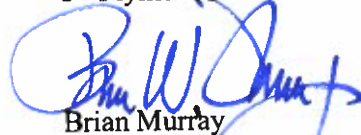
David P. Linsky
State Representative
5th Middlesex District



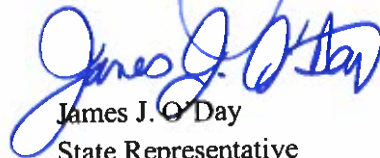
Jay D. Livingstone
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8th Suffolk District



Joan Meschino
State Representative
3rd Plymouth District



Brian Murray
State Representative
10th Worcester District



James J. O'Day
State Representative
14th Worcester District



Sarah K. Peake
State Representative
4th Barnstable District



Alice H. Peisch
State Representative
14th Norfolk District



Denise Provost
State Representative
27th Middlesex District



David M. Rogers
State Representative
24th Middlesex District



Frank I. Smizik
State Representative
15th Norfolk District



Thomas M. Stanley
State Representative
9th Middlesex District



Chynah Tyler
State Representative
7th Suffolk District



Steven Ultrino
State Representative
33rd Middlesex District



Chris Walsh
State Representative
6th Middlesex District
