



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

H2103

MARJORIE C. DECKER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

25th MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
Cambridge

Committees:
Financial Services
Health Care Financing
Housing

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 236
TEL. (617) 722-2430

Marjorie.Decker@MAhouse.gov

June 3, 2013

Senator John F. Keenan
Representative Jeffrey Sánchez
Joint Committee on Public Health

Dear Chairman Keenan and Chairman Sanchez,

I am writing in support of House Bill 2103, *An Act Relative to Folic Acid Awareness and Birth Defects Prevention*.

Folic acid is a B vitamin that has been found to reduce incidence of major birth defects in a baby's brain and spine (known as neural tube defects), including spina bifida and anencephaly. In fact, a recent study reported in the *Journal of Pediatrics* found the average rate of "isolated" neural tube defects (those occurring alone) between 1998 and 2005 in South Carolina fell from 1.4 for 1,000 births and fetal deaths to 0.6 per 1,000 in a period in which folic acid intake increased among women.

This legislation seeks to support healthy families and pregnancies by requiring the Department of Public Health to increase public knowledge of the importance of folic acid for women, especially those who are pregnant or trying to conceive, through a folic acid awareness initiative. The program will work to ensure all women are receiving the recommended dosage of 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. While this number may seem high, women can actually get the recommended dosage of folic acid by simply eating a bowl of cereal or taking a multivitamin.

I respectfully request swift and favorable action on the release of this legislation. It will help us support health families for generations to come. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 617-722-2430.

Sincerely,

Representative Marjorie C. Decker
25th Middlesex District