

Chair Sears Jr, Vice Chair Hasham, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Olivia Sauve, and I am a Vermont resident testifying in support of H.40 as passed in the Vermont House of Representatives.

In November of 2022, my former boyfriend removed his condom and attempted to rape me. I noticed his condom on the floor and I was able to move away from him before penetration. I distinctly remember the look on his face when our eyes met, and he was terrified. He knew he had violated me. In a way, I felt privileged in that moment because I'd caught him before he could do it. I was not taking contraceptives and I could've gotten pregnant if I hadn't caught him. My experience was not a privilege, and Vermont urgently needs legislation to hold individuals accountable for stealthing.

It is imperative that stealthing, and attempted stealthing, is outlawed in Vermont. Stealthing is often overlooked in cases of sexual assault, because victims gave consent to intercourse with a contraceptive. Consent to contraceptives is separate from consent to sexual intercourse without. The removal of contraceptives is dangerous and a violation of bodily autonomy. Individuals have the right to revoke consent, and file claims against those who violate their contraceptive consent.

The current legislation in Vermont does not explicitly protect against stealthing, which is why I never filed a civil claim against my assaulter. My experience is not an anomaly and I personally know many women who have been a victim to stealthing. Vermont needs to extend its legislative protections for women like me, and others who share my experience.

I urge the senate committee to vote favorably for H.40 and help expand protections for Vermonters experiencing sexual assault.