Falko Schilling, Advocacy Director ACLU of Vermont
To: House Human Services
Re: H.663 An Act Relating to Expanding Access to Contraceptives

ACLU

Vermont

PO Box 277
Montpelier, VT 05601
(802) 223-6304
acluvt.org

James Duff Lyall
Executive Director

Falko Schilling
Advocacy Director

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Living a safe and healthy life is a basic right – as is the freedom to define our own path. When someone decides to use contraceptives, it should be safe, affordable, and free from punishment or judgment, and that is exactly what H. 663 aims to achieve. Meaningful access to contraception is integral to our vision of a world in which people are free to express their sexuality, form intimate relationships, lead healthy sexual lives, and decide whether and when to have children.

Access to contraception is critical to an individual's autonomy, equality, and ability to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the nation. The ACLU seeks government policies that ensure access to affordable contraception; protect confidentiality; and prohibit sex discrimination or treating contraception differently from other care.

It is imperative that health insurance plans recognize the importance of contraception as a preventive service. The ACLU of Vermont supports the language in H.663 to expand the coverage requirement for contraceptives to all drugs, devices, and other products recognized by the FDA. We also support the requirement that public schools make over-the-counter contraceptives available to all secondary school students in Vermont, free of charge. School-based contraceptive availability programs are effective at increasing access to contraception and remove barriers that can exist when trying to access contraception in other settings. The use of school-based contraceptive availability programs does not increase teenage sexual activity but does increase the likelihood that teenagers will use contraception when they engage in sexual activity.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer questions.