

(SB1105)

GOVERNOR'S VETO

Pursuant to Article V, Section 6 of the Constitution of Virginia, I veto Senate Bill 1105, which seeks to establish a statutory right to obtain and use contraception in the Commonwealth.

I support contraception access. There is no question that access is protected today under the Constitution, as recognized in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), and *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972). Contraception remains a vital part of women's health care, and it plays an essential role in reducing abortions and promoting a culture of life. Thus, this legislation is unnecessary in its current form.

The General Assembly refused to adopt my reasonable amendments which included the addition of a conscience clause exemption that would protect religious freedom. Conscience clause exemptions have been upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States on multiple occasions, including in the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 573 U.S. 682 (2014) and *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania*, 140 S. Ct. 2367 (2020) cases.

This bill contains significant flaws by creating overly broad rights of action, potentially subjecting parents, political subdivisions, and medical professionals to litigation even when acting within their legal rights and professional bounds and further, would subvert a medical professional's judgment if a patient's well-being could be jeopardized. The legislation also fails to include adequate conscience clause protections for health care providers and weakens the fundamental right of parents to guide the upbringing and care of their children, which the General Assembly refused to adopt. By reintroducing a bill previously vetoed without addressing any concerns, the General Assembly is disregarding legitimate objections, creating legislation that would result in legal challenges that are unnecessary given the reality at hand.

As this issue continues to be debated, any legislative action on contraception must be coupled with clear conscience protections and must preserve the rights of families to make personal decisions in accordance with their beliefs.

Accordingly, I veto this bill.