

SENATE No. 1580

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Rebecca L. Rausch

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to health education in women's correctional institutions.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Rebecca L. Rausch

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex

SENATE No. 1580

By Ms. Rausch, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1580) of Rebecca L. Rausch for legislation relative to health education in women's correctional institutions. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to health education in women's correctional institutions.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 127 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
2 Section 16A the following new sections:-

3 Section 16B. Upon admission to a correctional institution and at any time thereafter, the
4 health services unit in each correctional institution where women are incarcerated shall make
5 available to all prisoners written information on women’s health, contraception, and sexually
6 transmitted infections. A user-friendly, culturally competent, and linguistically diverse brochure
7 containing the aforementioned information shall be created and distributed by the department of
8 public health.

9 Section 16C. Not less than 4 months prior to the date of release for a female prisoner of
10 child-bearing age, the medical director of the correctional institution where the prisoner is
11 incarcerated shall offer the prisoner contraception counseling and a gynecological exam
12 including a Pap Test. Following said counseling, the medical director shall offer to provide her

13 with the form of contraception she so chooses including but not limited to: female condoms,
14 male condoms, diaphragm, cervical cap, intra-uterine device, prescription birth control, or
15 contraceptive sponges. If the prisoner selects a type of contraception that must be taken for a
16 period of time before it becomes effective, then the prisoner shall begin the regimen not less than
17 three months prior to her date of release. Said medication shall be distributed during regular
18 medication distribution. Upon her release, the medical director shall furnish the woman with a 12
19 month prescription to refill her medication, a referral to a pharmacy or doctor where said
20 prescription can be refilled, and a referral to a primary care physician or gynecologist for follow
21 up care. The foregoing notwithstanding, no prisoner shall be required to undergo a gynecological
22 exam or accept or utilize any type of contraception.

23 SECTION 2. Said chapter 127, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting
24 after Section 96B the following new section:-

25 Section 96C. The superintendent of each correctional institution where women are
26 incarcerated shall offer a course on health education open to all eligible prisoners incarcerated in
27 said institutions. The course shall be offered no less than twice yearly and shall include, but not
28 be limited to, the following topics: general health, nutrition, mental health, women's health
29 concerns, domestic violence, substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, contraception,
30 emergency contraception, sex education, and pregnancy. Said course shall be developed in
31 consultation with the commissioner of public health.