

July 22, 2022

Hon. Speaker Ronald Mariano
Massachusetts State House Room 356
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA, 02133

RE: Support for the urgent passage of the Healthy Youth Act

Dear Speaker Mariano,

First, we'd like to thank you for all you have done to protect bodily autonomy and the rights of LGBTQ people in Massachusetts. We are thankful to live in a state where our elected leaders understand the urgent need for protections. Our rights are under attack, including the recent Supreme Court Decision overturning Roe v Wade. State legislatures across the country are attacking choice, and those same forces attacking women's bodily autonomy are also attacking LGBTQ youth: from Florida's "don't say gay" bill to Texas' criminalization of trans youth accessing care. We applaud the House's quick passage of the Reproductive Rights bill, and want to urge you to take additional steps.

Specifically, we must also advocate for the swift passage of the Healthy Youth Act ([S.2541](#)). The Reproductive Rights bill and the Healthy Youth Act are deeply connected. Without the necessary education, reproductive rights are not enough.

We need to provide the tools to raise a generation who understands bodily autonomy from a young age, so they can protect themselves, make necessary decisions about their own health and reproductive lives, and respect others. And we need to raise a generation who understands sexual orientation and gender identity, so they can feel secure in themselves and respect their LGBTQ peers.

The Healthy Youth Act is a crucial and simple opportunity to prevent the healthcare access crisis we are currently facing. When young people are able to understand their own bodies, health, and identities, they become adults who are engaged in their own healthcare and will defend the rights of their neighbors whose rights are under attack.

LGBTQ young people in Massachusetts are watching a steady attack on the rights of their peers across the country. The debate over their identities is damaging to their mental health--at a time when young people are already facing a mental health crisis. The need for the Healthy Youth Act is urgent--its passage will show Queer young people that they belong and that we care about their health, their identity, and their education.

We applaud the amazing progress that you have achieved on behalf of our communities; we urge you to seize this opportunity to take the next step now and pass the Healthy Youth Act this session. Young people in Massachusetts cannot wait another two years to get the information

Healthy Youth Act.

Respect. Consent. Prevent.

they need to stay healthy, feel seen, and be safe; they are watching us and their mental health is at stake.

We welcome any discussion that you can offer on ways to move this bill to the floor for a vote before the 31st. Please consider us a resource and reach out anytime. Together we can ensure that the Commonwealth's schools strengthen students, not silence them.

Thank you.

Healthy Youth Coalition Members

ACLU Massachusetts

AIDS Action Committee

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

Breaktime

EducateUS

Fenway Health

Girls Inc. of the Valley

Jane Doe Inc.

League of Women Voters Massachusetts

MassEquality

Massachusetts Healthy Youth Consortium

Mass NOW

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth

National Association of Social Workers - MA Chapter

Partners in Sex Education

Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts

Progressive Mass

REACH Beyond Domestic Violence

SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change

Stop It Now

Upper Cape Women's Coalition