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During federal attacks on birth control, Oregon stands strong *HB 2527 improves access to contraceptives, lowering unintended pregnancy rates*

SALEM – Even as attacks on birth control access continue at the federal level, Oregon Senate Democrats are standing strong in their support for a woman’s right to access these reproductive health services, such as contraceptives.

Research has shown that increased access to contraceptives lowers the rate of unintended pregnancies. House Bill 2527 – which was carried by Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-NW Portland and Beaverton) to passage on the Senate floor by a 29-0 vote – allows pharmacists to prescribe contraceptive patches and administer injectable contraceptives that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

“Women should have the choice of when and whether to have children. Until they decide to have children, we need to ensure they have access to various over-the-counter birth control products that are safe and easily administered,” Steiner Hayward said. “With federal attacks on women’s reproductive access, it is more important than ever that the states stand up for what’s right. Oregon will be among those leading the way with passage of this bill, as we increase access to self-administered injectable and hormonal birth control.”

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists supports improving access to contraceptives for women and has advocated for over-the-counter status for oral contraceptives as a strategy to prevent unintended pregnancy. In 2013, California became the first state to pass a law allowing women to go directly to a pharmacist to get prescription birth control pills. In 2015, the Oregon Legislature permitted Oregon pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptive patches and oral hormonal contraceptives to women 18 and

older. HB 2527 increases over-the-counter access by including Depo-Provera, Nuva Rings and other self-administered birth control.

As of April 1 of this year, 1,100 Oregon pharmacists had been trained to provide these services, and more have since then, according to the Oregon Board of Pharmacy. Other states that have adopted similar laws are using the Oregon Board of Pharmacy's training program, as well.

All women seeking prescriptions for birth control from their pharmacist must complete a questionnaire designed to screen for potential risks, allowing the pharmacist to select the appropriate product. Pharmacists are required to notify their patient's primary medication prescriber when the prescription is filled.

"Prescribing and administering these products is well within the capabilities of a licensed pharmacist," Steiner Hayward said. "It's a common-sense bill that will improve access to contraceptives for women and help lower the rate of unintended pregnancies."

HB 2527 now goes to Gov. Kate Brown for signature.

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