

California
Freethought Day

SB-523

Contraceptive Equity Act of 2021

Position: Support

Secular Advocate Talking Points

- SB 523 was passed by the California Senate on June 1, 2021. It currently sits in the State Assembly's Committee on Appropriations.
- The bill takes important steps towards ensuring religious employers are unable to impose their views on employees.
- It prevents religious employers from discriminating against individuals based on their reproductive health decision making. It would also make it easier for individuals to fight back against the discrimination leveraged against them.
- It clarifies that a religious employer's right to obtain health insurance without contraceptive coverage does not extend to contraceptive drugs or services (such as hormonal birth control or a vasectomy) used for other medical purposes.
- It increases transparency by requiring religious providers who opt not to offer vasectomies (because of their religious beliefs) to provide written notice of that fact to prospective employees.
- The bill would require that insurance cover all FDA approved contraceptives, including over the counter contraception without a prescription.
- This legislation expands contraceptive coverage to millions of Californians. If passed, it would be the most comprehensive reproductive rights bill since 2016, when co-pays for contraceptives were eliminated in Medi-Cal plans.
- A 2019 poll showed that 90% of California voters support birth control access and the Senate vote was 32-5 along partisan lines.