

May 5, 2026

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Senator Menjivar:

On behalf of tens of thousands of constituents, allied organizations, and more than 2,000 churches across California, California Family Council strongly **opposes** SB 608.

SB 608 mandates that public schools serving grades 7 through 12 make internal and external condoms available and easily accessible to students through school-based health centers and educational programs. It also prohibits retailers from declining to sell nonprescription contraception to minors based solely on age, and requires the California Department of Education to monitor school compliance with the California Healthy Youth Act. Taken together, these provisions bypass parental authority, overstate condom effectiveness, and risk accelerating harmful outcomes for adolescents.

Parental Authority Is Sidelined

California law already provides parents a limited opt-out from sex education instruction, but SB 608 creates a parallel distribution channel for contraceptives that operates entirely outside that framework. A student in seventh grade could obtain condoms at school with no parental notification whatsoever. This is not a minor procedural gap. Parents are constitutionally recognized as the primary decision-makers for their children's health and moral formation. Courts have long affirmed this authority, and legislation that systematically routes around it deserves serious scrutiny.

Public Health Data Does Not Support This Approach

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey consistently demonstrates that earlier sexual initiation correlates with higher numbers of sexual partners and elevated risk behaviors.¹ Adolescents who delay sexual activity tend to experience measurably better long-term health and social outcomes. SB 608 moves in the opposite direction by normalizing and facilitating early sexual activity.

Research from The Heritage Foundation further indicates that sexually active teenagers report lower levels of happiness, higher rates of depression, and a greater likelihood of attempting suicide compared to peers who are not sexually active.² Public policy that increases adolescent sexual activity does not promote youth wellness; it undermines it.

Condoms Do Not Provide the Protection This Bill Implies

SB 608 proceeds as though condom access is equivalent to disease prevention. The CDC's own data contradicts that assumption.³ While condoms can reduce the risk of certain sexually transmitted infections, they do not eliminate that risk. According to the CDC, condoms are less effective at preventing infections transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, including human

papillomavirus (HPV), herpes simplex virus, and syphilis—all of which remain significant public health concerns in California. The CDPH makes it clear, California is currently experiencing epidemic levels of syphilis.⁴ Distributing condoms to minors through public schools without clearly communicating these limitations creates a false sense of security and may actually worsen STD transmission rates statewide.

Abstinence remains the only method that is 100 percent effective at preventing both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Public policy should reflect that reality, not obscure it. Furthermore, SB 608's statewide retail provision removes one of the remaining safeguards governing minors' access to contraceptives outside the home. Retailers would be prohibited from exercising age-based discretion, eliminating an additional point of parental awareness. This provision lacks a clear public health justification and risks contributing to ongoing increases in sexually transmitted infections, including syphilis, while further diminishing the role of parents as primary guides in their children's health and moral decision-making.

For these reasons, California Family Council respectfully **opposes** SB 608 and urges the legislature to instead invest in approaches that strengthen parent-child communication, support delay of sexual initiation, and provide medically accurate information about the actual limitations of contraception.

Respectfully,



Greg Burt
Vice President
California Family Council

References

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report," *CDC*, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

² The Heritage Foundation, "Teens Who Are Sexually Active Face Greater Mental Health Challenges," *Heritage Foundation*, 2003. <https://www.heritage.org/education/report/sexually-active-teenagers-are-more-likely-be-depressed-and-attempt-suicide>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Condom Effectiveness," *CDC*, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/condom-effectiveness/index.html>

⁴ California Department of Health <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/CongenitalSyphilis.aspx>