

California governor rejects bill to provide free condoms to high schoolers

October 10 2023, by Cara Murez



A California bill would have made free condoms available for high

schoolers, but it was vetoed Sunday by Gov. Gavin Newsom because of cost.

California has a [budget deficit](#) of \$30 billion, Newsom noted in his [veto](#) of Senate Bill 541. This [bill](#), plus several other measures lawmakers passed, would have increased state budget costs by \$19 billion.

"This bill would create an unfunded mandate to [public schools](#) that should be considered in the annual budget process," the Democratic governor wrote.

If the bill had been allowed to go through, it would have required public schools with grades 9 through 12 to make condoms available and free for all students. Those with grades 7 through 12 would have been required to allow condoms to be available as part of educational or public health programs.

The state has 1.9 million high school students in more than 4,000 schools, the *Associated Press* reported. Under the bill, retailers would also have not been allowed to refuse to sell condoms to youth.

The bill would have helped "youth who decide to become sexually active to protect themselves and their partners from [sexually transmitted infections], while also removing barriers that potentially shame them and lead to [unsafe sex](#)," said the [bill](#)'s author, State Sen. Caroline Menjivar, a Democrat from Los Angeles, the *AP* reported.

Newsom said programs that increase access to condoms are "important to supporting improved adolescent sexual health."

Still, "with our state facing continuing economic risk and revenue uncertainty, it is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications, such as this measure," Newsom

added.

The California state Legislature, which has a Democratic majority, passed hundreds of bills before adjourning last month, the *AP* reported.

Other health bills Newsom vetoed were those that limited the price of insulin, banned caste-based discrimination and decriminalized possession and use of some hallucinogens, the *AP* reported.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on adolescents and [sexually transmitted infections](#).

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