

Case #2

Wisconsin State Representative Dan LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) was outraged when the University of Wisconsin-Madison's University Health Services (UHS) featured ads in the two student newspapers suggesting that students consider receiving prescriptions for emergency contraception (EC) prior to leaving for spring break. UHS services are available to any student at the UW-Madison, and as such they offer health expertise to students in the areas of medical treatment for illnesses and injuries, counseling for stress reduction, smoking cessation, nutrition, dermatology, sports medicine, as well as confidential testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Although a part of the state-funded University of Wisconsin System, the ads were paid for using student segregated fees which are not part of taxpayer dollars or academic tuition funds.

Following the publication of the ads, which were part of a series also advising students to protect themselves from sun exposure and limit their intake of alcohol, Representative LeMahieu initiated drafting legislation to ban any university health center in Wisconsin from advertising or distributing the morning-after pill (EC). LeMahieu contends, "I think it's offensive that the university is trying to tell young women to be prepared and to plan ahead so they can have promiscuous activities on spring break. I don't think that it's the role of the university to promote that type of activity, and I believe that's what their ad is asking young people to do." LeMahieu also added that the UW should be "made aware" that many people who are paying state taxes do not appreciate the offensive advertisements.

On June 16, 2005, Wisconsin's State Assembly voted 49-41 in favor of a bill prohibiting University of Wisconsin System health centers from advertising, prescribing or dispensing emergency contraception, making it the first state in the country to move towards banning EC on all state college campuses.