



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
The Reproductive Health Act

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the Reproductive Health Act

The National Organization for Women-New York City (NOW-NYC) strongly supports the Reproductive Health Act, which would place the protections of *Roe v. Wade* squarely into New York State law. The Act would ensure that women's fundamental right to make private medical decisions with her doctor would be protected, including the right to choose or refuse contraception and abortion.

New York State's abortion law was created before *Roe v. Wade* and has not changed since. Though groundbreaking for its time, the law needs serious revisions to bring women's healthcare into the 21st century:

- Current law in New York State makes abortion legal by carving out exceptions in the criminal law, instead of affirmatively enabling abortion as a legal right in the public health law, where it belongs. New York is the only state in the country that still regulates abortion in this manner.
- Current law in New York State puts women's health at risk by lacking an exception for a woman's health.
- Current law relies heavily on federal constitutional law. Now that the Supreme Court has actively restricted women's abortion rights, individuals in New York State can no longer rely on constitutional law or a pro-choice administration to ensure their rights.

Enacting the Reproductive Health Act will modernize New York State's laws, affirmatively ensuring comprehensive reproductive healthcare for women and bringing what's on the books on par with what is legal and practiced in New York State.

The Reproductive Health Act will:

- Protect the right to an abortion in cases where the woman's life or health is at risk, or in cases where the fetus has a fatal medical condition.
- Underscore that abortion is not a criminal matter, but rather, a health decision made by a woman in consultation with her healthcare provider.
- Ensure that New York remains a beacon and leader in women's reproductive healthcare.

As a proponent of women's rights and advocate for equality, NOW-NYC strongly supports this critical legislation and urges state lawmakers to pass it without delay.