



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

## Governor Hochul Signs Kaplan Bill Encouraging Women and Minorities in STEM

ANNA M. KAPLAN December 22, 2021

| ISSUE: **WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY, DIVERSITY IN THE WORKFORCE, CHILDBIRTH, FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS, HEALTH INSURANCE**



Governor Kathy Hochul today signed legislation addressing several challenges facing women and people of color. These bills address labor and health inequalities, from ensuring proper menstrual care is accessible, to promoting more women and minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields.

“New York must continue to break down barriers for women and fight inequality throughout our state,” **Governor Hochul said.** “These laws will address a variety of important issues, supporting STEM careers and helping to ensure equity and access in women’s health.”

### **Underrepresentation in STEM**

Legislation (S.531-B/A.530-B) directs the urban development corporation to conduct a study regarding the assistance needed by women and minorities to pursue STEM careers. The urban development corporation will work with the State Education Department and the Department of Labor to determine the amount assistance that should be provided in school districts, charter schools, BOCES, and private schools to develop new and enhance current STEM programs in grades 6-12 including career exploration, opportunities for technical skills attainment and partnerships with postsecondary education and training programs. Women and minorities are severely underrepresented in STEM, often because they were not encouraged to early on. In a 2010 survey by the Bayer Corporation of female and minority chemists and chemical engineers, 77 percent said significant numbers of women and minorities are missing from the U.S. STEM work force because “they were not identified, encouraged or nurtured to pursue STEM studies early on.” This bill will help identify the types of assistance necessary to encourage more women and minorities to enter STEM fields.

**Senator Anna M. Kaplan said,** “So many employers in today’s high-tech, global economy consistently struggle to find enough qualified individuals to fill the high-skill, high-paying jobs they create, and the workforce has never been truly reflective of the diversity of our community. It’s time we helped more young women and people of color to pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, and by encouraging these underrepresented groups to pursue STEM studies, we can provide greater opportunities for more young people in our community, and fill a critical need for workers skilled in the areas

of demand in today's economy. My bill with Assemblymember Rosenthal to study how to better assist women and minorities in accessing careers in STEM is an important first start, and I thank Governor Hochul for signing it into law."

**Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal said,** "This new law will help increase the numbers of women and minorities who pursue technology-based careers. While some of the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs are in the STEM field, the number of women and people of color employed in these fields continues to lag behind. A better understanding of the availability of grants designed to encourage underrepresented people to pursue careers in STEM is vital to help level the playing field and ensure access to well-paying and intellectually stimulating jobs. This bill had been vetoed in the past, and I appreciate the Governor seeing its importance and signing it into law."

### **Providing Menstrual Products to Those in Homeless Shelters**

Legislation (S.6572/A.529-A) provides menstrual products at no cost to menstruating individuals in homeless shelters, such as sanitary napkins, tampons and panty liners. Menstrual products can be unaffordable for those already struggling. This bill provides these products free of charge so those living in homeless shelters do not have to resort to using unsafe alternatives that can result in serious infection.

**Senator Michelle Hinchey said,** "Access to menstrual supplies is a fundamental health necessity, and yet in almost every community across our state, there are people who cannot afford period products — a dilemma that no one should ever have to face. In shelters throughout rural and upstate New York, menstrual products are one of the most highly requested, but difficult to come by, items. This legislation will change that and ensure that those in need can access period products to stay healthy and live with dignity. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this important legislation and my partner Assemblymember

Linda B. Rosenthal for championing this issue with me.”

**Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal said,** “Period poverty is real and it affects people all over the country, including right here in New York. Many low-income women cannot afford menstrual products must decide every month whether to buying food or menstrual products. This is a decision that no one should be forced to make. By providing people experiencing homelessness with access to free menstrual products, we ensure that they are not held back and can participate in employment, education and other endeavors. When women lead, issues like ensuring access to menstrual products are brought to the fore. I am grateful to Governor Hochul for signing this bill into law. After years of working to achieve menstrual equity, I can see our efforts to free the tampon finally beginning to pay off.”

#### **Healthcare Coverage Related to Childbirth**

Legislation (S.4827/A.7315) directs the Department of Financial services, in consultation with the Department of Health, to prepare a report with recommendations on their review of covered benefits related to childbirth offered by all health insurance providers in New York State. This review will include examination of length of stay, costs incurred by patients and reimbursed to providers and additional benefits offered. This bill will work to uncover hidden costs and disparities in rates negotiated by insurers covering the birth, and determine if statewide standards need to be adopted. The complexities of healthcare pricing should not add more stress to new parents during such a joyful time.

**Senator Julia Salazar said,** "People expecting a child face many unknowns, which often cause anxiety and uncertainty. One of these is the difficulty many face in ascertaining the costs they will incur for labor and delivery. This bill alleviates that concern by requiring the Department of Financial Services to study and report on the coverage actually provided by

insurance companies in New York for these services. I appreciate Governor Hochul's recognition of this need by signing this important bill today."

**Assemblymember Chantel Jackson said,** "Maternal Health has been of critical importance across the nation and here in New York State, as more needs to be done to close the gap in maternal mortality among women of color. Race, poverty and discrimination still play a role in the maternal care and delivery options available and afforded to women of color. This legislation will focus on creating a study that will shed a light and better understanding on the current insurance benefits and coverage related to childbirth. This legislation will help identify and address the areas where insurance coverage standards must be revised to better serve the maternal health needs of expectant mothers before, during and after delivery."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S6572

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to providing feminine hygiene products at no cost to menstruating individuals receiving temporary housing assistance

May 06, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by [Michelle Hinchey](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S4827

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- Introduced
- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Directs the department of financial services to review covered benefits related to childbirth

February 12, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by [Julia Salazar](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S531B

STEM, Women's Issues, Technology, Job skill training, career education

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- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Directs the urban development corporation to conduct a study regarding the assistance needed to encourage women and minorities to pursue technology careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics

January 04, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by [Anna M. Kaplan](#)

Do you support this bill?