



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Majority to Advance Reproductive Rights and Maternal Health Package to Support Reproductive Equity

On the 51st Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Decision the Senate Democratic Majority is Advancing Landmark Legislation to Strengthen New Yorkers' Reproductive Rights and Improve Maternal Health

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority will advance landmark legislation to strengthen reproductive rights and improve maternal health outcomes for all New Yorkers. On the 51st anniversary of Roe v. Wade decision, the New York Senate Democratic Conference is building on its long standing work to [protect abortion rights and expand access to reproductive care](#) in New York. Abortion care is an essential component of the reproductive health continuum and at a time when abortion bans are proliferating across the country, the U.S. maternal mortality crisis has continued to worsen with a maternal mortality rate that is three times higher than other high-income nations. The U.S. maternal mortality rate is even higher for Black women, who are nearly three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women.

This package features legislation to strengthen New Yorkers' privacy rights by requiring companies that collect and sell healthcare information to receive affirmative consent by users to sell such information to third parties; establishes a Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program to ensure access to abortion care across the state and enacts the Hospital Transparency Act. This package includes a Workgroup on Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards, stronger protections for pregnant individuals during special enrollment periods for healthcare insurance; authorizes the New York State Department of Health to create a pregnancy mobile App and directs the agency to include maternal death data disaggregated by race in pregnancy informational materials. In addition, this slate of bills includes legislation to allow doulas to enter

operating rooms in hospitals and guarantee birthing individuals access to their doulas in healthcare facilities; requires healthcare providers to offer a maternal depression screening to new mothers; establishes an uterine fibroid education awareness campaign through the Department of Health and bans carcinogenic substances from menstrual products.

“As the country reels from the Dobbs decision on what would have been the 51st anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we are making it clear that we will continue to champion policies that safeguard a person’s right to choose and expand access to reproductive health care,” said **Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “While reproductive rights are under attack and the U.S. maternal mortality crisis continues to worsen, we are leading the way by passing legislation to address this crisis, and by taking steps to combat the unacceptable racial disparities in maternal mortality. I want to thank our Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee, Senator Lea Webb and the Majority Conference for their critical work on these issues as well as the advocates who have worked day in and out to advance reproductive equity.”

Bill sponsor and Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee, Senator Lea Webb, said “I am extremely proud of the work we are doing to increase access to quality maternal and reproductive health care in New York. We know that these issues disproportionately impact people of color and rural communities, which often experience poor health outcomes. This package of legislation will make sure that everyone gets equitable access to comprehensive healthcare including but not limited to timely prenatal care, safe birthing experiences, comprehensive postpartum care, and reproductive health services. This is another win in New York’s fight for reproductive rights and access, and an important step towards more equitable maternal health care throughout our state.”

The legislation being passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Requires Maternal Depression Screenings to New Moms:** This bill, [S2039A](#), sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk, directs the Department of Health and the Office of Mental Health to develop guidance for incorporating maternal depression screenings into routine prenatal and postpartum care and to identify and publish trainings designed to support these screenings on the Department’s website.
- **Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program:** This bill, [S348C](#), sponsored by Senator Cordell Cleare, enacts the reproductive freedom and equity grant program to ensure access to abortion care in the state by providing funding to abortion providers and non-profit organizations whose primary function is to facilitate access to abortion care.
- **Special Enrollment Period Protections:** This bill, [S201](#), sponsored by Senator Cordell Cleare, bars a health insurance plan or contract from imposing a fee or other penalty for obtaining coverage during a special enrollment period where pregnancy is the cited “qualifying life event.”
- **Uterine Fibroid Awareness Campaign:** This bill, [S3219A](#), sponsored by Senator Cordell Cleare, directs the Department of Health to establish and run a public awareness

and education campaign on the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of uterine fibroids and the elevated risk for Black and Brown women to suffer from this condition.

- **Ban on Carcinogenic Substances from Menstrual Products:** This bill, [S3529A](#), sponsored by Senator Nathalia Fernández, prohibits the sale of any menstrual products which contain certain restricted and harmful substances that may have a carcinogenic effect on the human body.
- **Hospital Transparency Act:** This bill, [S1003A](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, provides information to patients and the public on whether the hospital, or hospitals, in their area provides the care they seek prior to admission.
- **Protection of Health Information:** This bill, [S158B](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, would govern companies that collect and sell healthcare information, and provides additional rights and protections to users related to the sale of their private health information.
- **Permit Doulas in the Operating Room of Maternal Care Facilities:** This bill, [S5991A](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, grants a doula guaranteed access to the operating room during a C-section delivery in circumstances where no other support person is available.
- **Guarantees Access to a Designated Doula:** This bill, [S5992A](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, guarantees expecting and new mothers' access to their designated doula.
- **Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards Workgroup:** This bill, [S7702A](#), sponsored by Senator Lea Webb, creates a Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards Workgroup to study, evaluate, and make recommendations on the development of standards to ensure quality, culturally appropriate care for all perinatal and birthing individuals.
- **Maternal Care Mobile App for Medicaid Recipients:** This bill, [S7700A](#), sponsored by Senator Lea Webb, authorizes the Department of Health to provide a prenatal and postnatal care mobile application to Medicaid recipients receiving prenatal and postpartum care.
- **Maternal Mortality Data in Informational Materials:** This bill [S3610](#), sponsored by Senator Lea Webb, requires the Department of Health to include racial statistics on maternal deaths in informational materials provided to prospective maternity patients.

Bill sponsor Senator Liz Krueger said, “Ensuring access to a broad range of reproductive and maternal healthcare continues to be a critical fight nationwide, and New York is no exception. I am proud that the Senate Majority is once again prioritizing these important issues by passing a significant and impactful package of bills.”

Bill sponsor Senator Samra Brouk said, “For too long, the necessity of women’s health and maternal care has been overlooked and undervalued, and I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues in the Senate Majority for their work to make New York a

leader in providing quality care. This package of legislation, which includes my bill to make maternal depression screenings more accessible, is essential in making sure that birthing parents across the state are treated with the care and dignity they deserve. Maternal mental health conditions are the most commonly occurring pregnancy-related complication and are the third leading cause of maternal death in New York—deaths that we have the tools and resources to prevent. I look forward to our continued work to improve maternal health outcomes in New York—by addressing maternal mental health, expanding access to doula care, and making sure that every birthing person’s voice is heard.”

Bill sponsor Senator Cordell Cleare said, “I am honored to sponsor three bills as part of the Maternal & Reproductive Health Package that we will pass today. My legislation will ensure that pregnant women have immediate access to healthcare, without barriers; empower those who have uterine fibroids to learn about their condition and seek treatment; and finally enact the Reproductive Freedom & Equity Grant Program to ensure all women are supported and cared for in a post-Dobbs world.”

Bill sponsor Senator Nathalia Fernández said, “It is shocking to me that we could overlook a toxic chemicals issue that intersects with both women’s health and environmental safety. This bill would put a stop to the sale of harmful chemicals in feminine hygiene products like mercury, formaldehyde, and PFAS. An individual can use over 16,000 feminine hygiene products over the course of their lifetime, ranging from tampons to pads and wipes. This opens their bodies to an influx of all types of chemicals and substances. I am proud that this bill will stand with a package of Maternal and Reproductive Health bills from my colleagues that will protect both mothers and children.”

Bill sponsor Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “New Yorkers need to know what healthcare services are available at their local hospital and whether essential services like reproductive care have been removed from their community due to hospital policies. My bill, the Hospital Transparency Act, will finally confront the alarming wave of disappearing services we’ve seen in recent years and help us shed light on the healthcare deserts they’ve created, which significantly impact rural communities where access to healthcare has always been limited. I’m proud to sponsor this legislation and to work alongside my colleagues in the Senate Majority to ensure that reproductive rights and healthcare in New York are protected, expanded, and equitable.”

Bill sponsor Senator Roxanne J. Persaud said, “Quality reproductive and maternal care is fundamentally a matter of women's dignity and racial equity. The bills included in today's package will go far in advancing those goals, and I'm proud to have supported them along with my colleagues in the Senate Majority Conference. I'm particularly excited about and want to thank Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for including two of my bills, S5991-A and S5992-A, in this package as well. Doulas play an important role in maternal care before, during, and after childbirth, and these bills will ensure mothers can access their assistance at those critical times.”

Tess Barker, Board Chair, Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts said, “The reproductive health and freedom of every New Yorker is paramount, and with today’s actions from the New York State Senate, New York can make significant strides forward for patient access, patient privacy, and addressing the maternal mortality and morbidity crisis. This package of legislation should be an example and blueprint for other states on how to stand up to increasing attacks on reproductive health, abortion access, and the rights of patients and providers. From measures supporting doulas, to expanding access to prenatal and postpartum care, and the establishment of the landmark Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program - these critical measures will have profound impacts on the lives of New Yorkers, their families, and their futures.”

Aisha Mills, interim president, National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund said, “The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) applauds elected leaders in the New York State Senate for advancing proactive legislation in their Reproductive Rights and Maternal Health Package. We also commend our partners at the New York Abortion Access Fund (NYAAF) for continuing to fight for people accessing care in New York, a critical access state. While abortion bans exacerbate an existing maternal mortality crisis, elected allies must continue the critical work of protecting and expanding access to reproductive health care until reproductive freedom is a reality for all.”

New York Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Donna Lieberman said, “In the face of ever-increasing obstacles to reproductive health care and gender justice, the Senate is making sure New York leads the nation. We need to recenter the political fight around reproductive and maternal health care on patients' real experiences: funding abortions for people who can't afford them, identifying care deserts where New Yorkers have nowhere to go, helping people find hospitals that won't turn them away, and protecting personal health data from being used to criminalize people. These bills build on the promise of the landmark Reproductive Health Act and will help make abortion access in New York not just a right, but a reality.”

Christine Herde, MD, FACOG, Chair, ACOG District II said, “The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), District II applauds the New York State Senate for continuing to pass important reproductive health protections including S. 348-C, to create the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Program. This important legislation is critical for ensuring continued robust access to abortion services in the state, and to support the network of clinicians and organizations which facilitate access.”

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