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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

May 9, 2017

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Democratic Conference Leader
907 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable John J. Flanagan
Senate Majority Leader
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Assembly Speaker
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
Independent Democratic Conference Leader
913 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Legislative Leaders:

I am urging you to support two important pieces of legislation that would strengthen New York State laws to protect women's health and codify access to reproductive health services for all New Yorkers: the **Reproductive Health Act (S2796/A1748)** and **Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (S3668/A1378)**.

The Reproductive Health Act (RHA) would update New York State law to codify *Roe v. Wade* and ensure that a woman's reproductive health, including the right to a medically safe abortion is protected even if efforts are made to undermine it at the national level. In addition, RHA would update state law to move regulations related to abortion procedures from the penal code to public health law in order to protect women and providers from criminal prosecution. Furthermore, RHA would expand the medical providers to include Advanced Practice Clinicians (APCs) like nurse practitioners, physician assistants and certified nurse midwives to guarantee increased access to healthcare services throughout the state.

The Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (CCCA) which passed the Assembly with a strong majority (103-43) requires insurance companies to cover all FDA-approved contraception without a co-payment. CCCA would also allow women access to 12 months of continuous contraception coverage providing consistency in care and a greater sense of ease, especially for women in rural areas. It also includes coverage for over the counter emergency contraception and adds licensed midwives to the list of medical providers eligible to prescribe. This ensures there are no gaps in contraceptive coverage and codifies this access in New York State.

Access to healthcare is vital to all of our constituents, many of whom work every single day and still struggle to cover premiums, co-payments and deductibles. But when this access is threatened, it is women who bear the burden most. We are fortunate to have organizations like **Planned Parenthood** that provide women with services regardless of their ability to pay. However, women should not be placed in a position where something as simple as contraception is out of reach.

The legislative process has an advantage by providing the permanency that regulations lack and addresses the urgency of this issue in the way the constitutional amendment process cannot. The passage of both the Reproductive Health Act and the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act would provide immediate protections for the women of New York. It is our responsibility to guarantee access to reproductive services and expand options as well as respect for women's rights to make their own healthcare decisions. Putting this language in statute would secure women's access to reproductive health services, not withstanding changes in federal administrations.

Given the ongoing attempts to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act and the issuance of Executive Orders that undermine a women's access to health care, it is critical for New York State to take immediate action to pass the **Reproductive Health Act (S2796/A1748)** and **Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (S3668/A1378)**.

Sincerely,


State Senator Velmanette Montgomery
25th Senate District