

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT Reproductive Health Act

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

Proposal: The Reproductive Health Act guarantees a woman's right to control her reproductive health; ensures that a woman will be able to have an abortion if her health is endangered; treats the regulation of abortion as an issue of public health and medical practice, rather than as a potential crime; and guarantees everyone the right to use or refuse contraception.

Background: New York's abortion law was enacted in 1970, before the Supreme Court issued the *Roe v Wade* decision in 1973. New York's law is outdated and inadequate. After almost 40 years, times have changed but our state law still regulates abortion in the criminal code and lacks protections if a woman's health is endangered.

New Yorkers are not secure in relying on the federal protections provided by *Roe v Wade*. State legislatures across the country have enacted over 450 bills that would ban or restrict abortion, some of which are a direct challenge to *Roe v Wade*. All it takes is one of these challenges to reach the Supreme Court, and *Roe* could be overturned.

Moreover, New Yorkers overwhelmingly support a woman's right to decide when and whether to have a child. In fact, three-quarters of New York voters support the Reproductive Health Act -- even after hearing arguments against the bill. New York State must continue its proud tradition of leadership on issues pertaining to women's health rights.

Conclusion: As one of the leading providers of reproductive health care services in New York City, Planned Parenthood strongly supports the Reproductive Health Act and urges state lawmakers to pass it without delay.