



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Standing Up For Women's Health And Rights: Senate Democrats Force Vote On Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act And Reproductive Health Act

GARY GINSBURG May 30, 2018

| ISSUE: **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACT (RHA), COMPREHENSIVE CONTRACEPTION CARE ACT, HEALTH EQUITY, MATERNAL HEALTH, WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

# NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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# DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

For Immediate Release: May 30, 2018

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## Standing Up For Women's Health And Rights: Senate Democrats Force Vote On Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act And Reproductive Health Act

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Conference today announced plans to force the Senate Republican Majority to vote on the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act and the Reproductive Health Act. Both women's rights bills have major support among New York voters, yet have been repeatedly blocked from becoming law by the Senate Republican Majority. Additionally, the Senate Democratic Conference issued a report, *Pricey Predicament: Access To Affordable Emergency Contraception*, which outlined the need for better contraceptive care to be provided to New York women by health insurance companies

"Women's rights are human rights, and no New York woman should be denied her health care coverage and rights," Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "Ensuring that women have access to safe, affordable reproductive health care coverage, and that contraceptive coverage is provided by health insurance companies are common sense policies. The idea that the Senate Republicans are staunchly opposed to protecting women's rights and ensuring their health care options is not in-line with our New York values and voters. New York women deserve Senate leadership that will stand up for their rights, not hold them back."

Reproductive Health Act Bill Sponsor, Senator Liz Krueger said, "New York must be a national leader in protecting women's equality and abortion access, ensuring that complex and personal medical decisions about reproductive healthcare are the sole responsibility of a woman and her medical providers. The State Senate needs to act now to pass the RHA and CCCA to protect the reproductive health and rights of New Yorkers in the face of increasing threats from the federal government."

If enacted, the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act, (S.3668/A.1378), sponsored by Republican Senator John Bonacic, would require health insurance companies to include coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive options, as well as contraceptive counseling, and services. This legislation passed the State Assembly by a 103-43 margin. The Reproductive Health Act, (S.2796/A.1748), sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, will modernize New York's nearly 50 year old statutes regarding abortion and ensure that New York State law treats abortion as health care, not a criminal act. This measure passed the State Assembly by a 93-44 margin.

Andrea Miller, President of the National Institute for Reproductive Health, said, "As Washington continues to roll back women's rights and ability to control their bodies and their futures, New York has the opportunity to stand up for reproductive health, rights, and justice. By enshrining access to abortion in our state's statutes and guaranteeing no-copay contraception through the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) and Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (CCCA), respectively, we will ensure women in New York have full agency to determine whether and when they want a family, regardless of what happens at the federal level. And while the RHA and CCCA have each passed the Assembly, the Republican-controlled Senate remains obstinate. Enough is enough. I'm proud to stand with Senator Krueger and Senate Minority Leader Stewart-Cousins in urging the State Senate to reconsider its backwards thinking and ensure all women have access to a full range of reproductive health care by passing the RHA and CCCA and committing to moving forward."

Robin Chappelle Golston, President & CEO, Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts, said, "Affordable, accessible reproductive health care is essential to New Yorkers statewide. Supporting consistent contraceptive use and continuing our legacy of safe, legal abortion is commonsense, not controversial. Our state needs to be a leader and continue to promote sound public policy that supports essential health care."

Iffath Abbasi Hoskins, MD, FACOG, Chair, ACOG District II, said, “As an organization representing women’s healthcare physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, (ACOG) District II strongly supports a woman’s right to decide whether or not to have children and the number and timing of her pregnancies. To assist her in making these choices, full access to reproductive health services, including access to affordable birth control and abortion is imperative. Comprehensive contraception care and safe, legal abortion are necessary components of women’s healthcare. New York State must act to ensure that these health services are protected by passing the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act and the Reproductive Health Act. ACOG District II thanks the NYS Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the bill sponsors for their leadership in ensuring that women’s reproductive healthcare decisions are protected in New York State.”

Donna Lieberman, Executive Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said, “Access to health care, especially for women, is under attack nationwide. Legislators in Albany must lead by example and protect the rights of New Yorkers. It’s time for the State Senate to stand up for women, update our antiquated abortion law to comply with Roe v. Wade, and pass the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act that would prohibit insurers from denying contraceptive coverage.”

Dr. Azmina Bhayani, Family Medicine Physician in New York and Fellow with Physicians for Reproductive Health, said, “I am here along with many health care advocates today because our patients across the state of New York deserve better. Instead of allowing me and my colleagues to do our job, our current state policies interfere with the patient-provider relationship. I serve my patients best when I can provide care based on scientific evidence and the unique needs of each of my patients.”

The Senate Democratic report, *Pricing Predicament: Access To Affordable Emergency Contraception*, highlights that over-the-counter emergency contraception is 95% effective in

preventing pregnancies if taken within 24-hours. The average cost of over-the-counter emergency contraception is approximately \$60 which could be a major deterrent for low-wage New York women. The Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act would address those concerns by ensuring health insurance companies cover these options at zero additional costs, but it has been held up by the Senate Republican Majority despite being sponsored by a Republican Senator. To view the full report, please visit:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/380492674/Pricey-Predicament-Access-to-Affordable-Emergency-Contraception>

Senate Democratic Deputy Leader Jeff Klein said, “There is nothing more fundamental to women’s equality than a woman’s right to control her own reproductive health. Today we are sending a message to Washington, and all who seek to jeopardize women’s reproductive rights, that New York won’t stop until Roe v. Wade is codified, and all barriers to contraceptive access are removed.”

Chair of the Senate Democratic Conference Senator Michael Gianaris, said, “Supporting affordable access to contraception and codifying Roe v. Wade will ensure women can plan their families and make the medical decisions right for them. I am proud to support these proposals to provide women with the freedom to make their own health choices.”

Senator Marisol Alcantara said, “As the sole Latina representation in the New York State Senate, I proudly stand with my colleagues and say that I 100% support the Reproductive Health Act and Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act. While the federal government threatens our women’s right to choose and ability to decide when they want to have children, at the state level, we must do everything to counteract and push back on those threats. Thank you to my colleagues for highlighting the importance of these two bills, and I am here to say that Latinas are in support as well.”

Senator David Carlucci said, “In New York its critical we expand health care access to all women and protect their right to choose. Women should be able to access contraception regardless of cost and choose their medical care during a pregnancy.”

Senator Martin Malavé Dilan said, “For too long women and families have had decisions that are theirs alone to make, that are backed by medicine and practice, made a political football with no regard for families or the health and well-being of women. These are common sense, and constitutionally supported measures, that have long withstood medically unfounded objections and falsehoods. This is about healthcare and access to it. That’s it.”

Senator Jesse Hamilton said, “Access to health care is a human right. We need to ensure women are fully empowered to make their own decisions for their health. That is why the Senate needs to pass both the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act and the Reproductive Health Act. Every senator should go on record in support of New York women making health decisions free from excessive costs or the state looking over their shoulder. Patients need a doctor’s consultation, not a consult with the legislature. Legislators should not second-guess women’s decisions on contraception and their reproductive health – instead we should support women’s individual freedom to make the judgements best for themselves.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “As the Trump administration and right-wing state legislatures across the country continue to undermine the constitutional protections afforded by Roe v Wade, New York must take every opportunity to advance reproductive rights. Passing Senator Krueger and Leader Stewart Cousins’ Reproductive Health Act (RHA) and the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage ACT (CCCA) guarantees timely and affordable access to contraception, and brings our own state laws up to the standard enshrined by Roe v Wade. The time to act is now. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Democratic Conference to pass these critical measures before the end of session.”

Senator Tim Kennedy said, “Stalling a vote on the Reproductive Health Act and the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act isn’t just stalling critical health reforms, it’s stalling the progress of women’s rights in New York State. I stand with my conference in urging the Senate Majority to do the right thing by bringing these bills to the floor for a vote.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am proud to stand with my Democratic Senate Colleagues in support of the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act (CCCA) and the Reproductive Health Act (RHA). Together they ensure insurance coverage for FDA-approved contraception and codify Roe v. Wade into New York State public health law, where it belongs. With so much uncertainty at the Federal level regarding the status of healthcare and women’s reproductive healthcare choices, it is essential that we act to protect the health and rights of all New Yorkers.”

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*Senator Velmanette Montgomery said, “Access to healthcare plays a vital role in ensuring women have agency over their own bodies and this is especially true of reproductive health services. Women’s healthcare is under attack all across the country and the current federal administration is threatening to undo decades of work on this issue. I am proud to cosponsor both the Reproductive Health Act and the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act because access to healthcare services cannot be taken for granted. It is time we move to preserve these rights for the women of New York State.”*

Senator Jose Peralta said, “I have always fought to put an end to gender discrimination. As part of my efforts to end inequality, protecting women’s rights has been at the core of my work. There is no room for more excuses. As a 100% pro-choice legislator and co-sponsor of these and other critical proposals to advance women’s rights, it is time to pass the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act and the Reproductive Health Act, a bill that

would codify Roe v. Wade. It is time to right this wrong.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “It is unacceptable that under New York State law women still face obstacles when making personal decisions about their reproductive health. I stand committed to working with my colleagues in the Democratic Conference to pass both the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act and Reproductive Health Act into law. Every New Yorker has the right to be informed of all their options when it comes to their health care and medical providers should never be restricted when it comes to advising patients regarding their treatment options.”

Senator Diane Savino said, “While on the train of life this issue may be three stops behind me, but for those just boarding the train I owe them the same or better protections I enjoyed.”

Senator Luis Sepulveda said, “In a world so out of balance where we have people dying from preventable illnesses and other suffering due to barriers created to limit their access to health care, we have dedicated public servants working to correct injustices and breakdown policies that harm communities. I strongly support the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act and the Reproductive Health Act because they are good public health policies.”

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Reproductive Health Act, Reproductive Rights, Women's Rights, Health Care

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