



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

Long Island Towns Repeal Abortion Restrictions Following Investigation and Call to Action by State Officials and Advocates

ANNA M. KAPLAN September 21, 2022

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Two weeks ago, Senator Anna M. Kaplan and Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti uncovered the results of their investigation into local abortion restrictions, and called for their urgent repeal by local governments

Today, Kaplan & Sillitti were joined by legislative colleagues and advocates from Planned Parenthood to announce the success of their calls for repeal, as the Town of Hempstead and Town of Oyster Bay have heeded their demands and repealed their local abortion restrictions

The group applauded the action by Oyster Bay and Hempstead, and urged the remaining communities with restrictions on the books to follow suit in order to protect women's rights across Long Island in a post-Roe era

MINEOLA, NY (September 21, 2022) - Today, New York State Senator **Anna M. Kaplan** (D-North Hills) and Assemblywoman **Gina L. Sillitti** (D-Port Washington) held a press conference on the steps of the Nassau County Courthouse in Mineola, NY to announce progress in their effort to rid Long Island communities of local abortion restrictions known as "trigger laws." Two weeks ago, Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti uncovered the results of their investigation into local abortion restrictions, which found that 5 communities on Long Island still had restrictions on the books, and called for their urgent repeal by local governments. In the two weeks since, The Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay have heeded their demands, and repealed their local abortion restrictions in a quiet fashion.

Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti were joined by **Senator Jim Gaughran**, **Assemblywoman Judy Griffin**, and advocates from **Planned Parenthood of Greater New York** to announce the success of their repeal effort, and to call for further action by the three remaining communities with restrictions on the books.

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said "If we've learned anything from the extremist Supreme Court's reckless decision to steal our Constitutional right to choose, it's that we can't take anything for granted, and we've got to fight for our rights at every level of government, because clearly there are people who will stop at nothing to assert their control over women, and they'll use every trick in the book to do it. Two weeks ago, I called on local officials to repeal draconian abortion restrictions that were still on the books here on Long Island, and today I'm proud to announce that the Towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead did exactly what I told them to do:

they repealed their abortion restrictions! While they may not have done so with any fanfare, this is a moment worth celebrating, and I thank them for this achievement. Now, it's time for officials in the remaining three Long Island communities to do their part and repeal their abortion restrictions, which we know were enacted with the sole purpose of getting between women and their right to choose."

Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti said "When the Supreme Court overturned a Woman's Right to Choose, it sent shockwaves across the country and forced every elected official at every level of government to make a decision; are we going to stand for women's rights or against them? I joined my colleagues in the State Legislature to send an unequivocal message, New York will always support a woman's right to choose. I am glad that the Town of North Hempstead, the Town of Hempstead, and the Town of Oyster Bay have joined our call to action and repealed the anti-abortion statutes still on their books, sending a message to women everywhere that your rights are too important to leave unprotected."

Following action by the **Town of North Hempstead** to repeal their local abortion restrictions over the summer, Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti undertook a comprehensive review of the municipal code of over 110 of Long Island's Counties, Towns, Villages, and Cities, finding that the **Town of Hempstead, Town of Oyster Bay, Town of Huntington, Village of Freeport, and Village of Williston Park**, with a combined population of over 1.25 million people, still had draconian abortion restrictions on their books.

On September 8, Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti unveiled the results of their investigation, and called on the municipalities to repeal their restrictions. On September 13, the Town of Oyster Bay was the first to heed their demands, introducing a repeal measure during their September Board Meeting as a last minute walk-on resolution following three hours of closed-door executive session. On September 20, the Town of Hempstead followed suit and adopted a repeal measure during their September Board meeting with little fanfare.

Following their action, the Town of Huntington and the Villages of Freeport and Williston Park are the only remaining communities with abortion restrictions on the books.

Assemblywoman Judy Griffin said "Last night, we were reminded of the power of women's voices. In a victory for choice, for safety, and for women's health, the Hempstead Town Board heard our call to action and voted to repeal a 50-year-old section of the town code that limited the right to an abortion - a so-called 'trigger law.' Thank you Supervisor Clavin and Town Board members! Our work is not complete. Now I reiterate my call for the Village of Freeport to follow the bipartisan model of Town of Hempstead, Town of Oyster Bay, and Town of North Hempstead by repealing their trigger law in the village code and speaking with one voice: we support women, we support choice, and we support a woman's right to choose."

Assemblymember Charles Lavine said "Action such as this is necessary to provide the legal support for women to be able to choose what to do with their own bodies. We must continue at every level of government, from municipality on up to the state, to do whatever is necessary to protect women's reproductive freedom amidst a continuous assault on their rights."

The laws generally restrict access to abortions of any kind, including medication based, non-surgical abortions, by requiring that all abortions take place in a hospital setting, effectively outlawing abortion clinics like Planned Parenthood, and adding an extraordinary time and cost barrier to keep women from accessing this vital healthcare. Individuals found violating these ordinances could be subject to jail time and fines. [Click here to download the full text of each municipality's restrictions.](#)

The laws in each municipality were passed and added to local code in the early 1970's during a wave of such measures being enacted across Long Island as a means of restricting access to

abortions in local communities and preventing the establishment of clinics that provide abortion care. While the laws are not presently enforceable due to action by the State Legislature to protect abortion rights statewide through measures like **The Reproductive Health Act**, which was passed in 2019 and co-sponsored by Senator Kaplan, the fall of Roe V. Wade has shown that no protection is guaranteed in our nation's current climate, and without federal protection, State Law is the last line of protection for women's rights.

At a time when certain candidates for State Legislature and Governor are campaigning on a platform of repealing protections recently enacted in State Law, it's incumbent that existing "trigger laws" on the books, like those discovered here on Long Island, are removed in order to protect women's access to reproductive healthcare no matter what happens in a future State election.