



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1416

Resolution urging the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Reproductive Health Act.

By the Public Advocate (Ms. James), the Speaker (Council Member Mark-Viverito) and Council Members Levin and Constantinides

Whereas, In 1970, New York State was one of the first states in the nation to support the reproductive rights of women by pioneering legislation that decriminalized abortion; and

Whereas, This legislation was groundbreaking and crucial to ensuring the reproductive health and freedom of women; and

Whereas, In 1973, the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the country with the Roe v. Wade decision; and

Whereas, Following this ruling many states passed laws limiting women's ability to access the procedure in an effort to erode the rights granted by the Supreme Court; and

Whereas, According to the Guttmacher Institute, between 2011 to 2016, there have been 334 abortion restrictions adopted nationally, constituting 30% of all abortion restrictions enacted since the 1973 decision; and

Whereas, Furthermore, members of Congress who have anti-abortion positions have been trying for several years to pass a national ban on all abortions at or after 20 weeks of pregnancy; and

Whereas, In addition, President Donald Trump stated his intention to appoint a Supreme Court Justice who will help overturn Roe v. Wade; and

Whereas, The ability to access safe abortions is necessary so that women can

plan their families without risking their health; and

Whereas, The Guttmacher Institute notes that improved contraceptive use has helped women to better avoid unintended pregnancies, and as a result, the national abortion rate declined to 17 per 1,000 women aged 15-44 in 2011, the lowest since 1973; and

Whereas, According to the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in 2013, almost 6 in 10 known pregnancies among NYC women were unintended; and

Whereas, While abortion rates have declined, women who are struggling financially experience higher levels of abortion; and

Whereas, In 2011, there were 225 abortion providers in New York state, and 94 of those were in clinics, which was a 10% decline in overall providers and a 9% decline in clinics from 2008; and

Whereas, According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, 7 out of 10 New Yorkers support a woman's right to choose; and

Whereas, The New York State legislation passed in 1970 is now outdated and needs revision; and

Whereas, On January 17, 2017 the New York State Assembly passed the Reproductive Health Act, as it has for the past several legislative sessions; and

Whereas, Despite having overwhelming support of New Yorkers, the New York State Senate continues to deny the passage of this legislation; and

Whereas, The Reproductive Health Act is legislation that would provide safeguards for New York's women in the face of eroding federal protections by codifying current federal law into state law; and

Whereas, The Reproductive Health Act would also take abortion out of the penal code, and regulate it as a matter of public health and medical practice; and

Whereas, It is critical that the New York State Legislature takes action to pass this legislation to explicitly outline these fundamental rights in state law; and

Whereas, The rights of women should include full control over their bodies and reproductive choices;

and

Whereas, It is now more vital than ever for New York to take the lead and stand up for the health and freedom of its women; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Reproductive Health Act.

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