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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act
S. 5829 (Rules)
2007

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

Family Planning Advocates of New York State strongly supports this legislation designed to protect the fundamental right of individuals to make private reproductive health care decisions.

In 1970, when New York was one of the first states in the nation to expand access to safe and legal abortion, its law was considered an important step to protect women's health and reduce maternal morbidity and mortality. Much has changed over the past 37 years, and while medical practice and policy have advanced in New York, the law has remained frozen in time.

The need to reform New York law has not been a pressing issue because the law is interpreted and applied to comport with federal Constitutional law. However, the Supreme Court set a new and dangerous precedent when it upheld the federal abortion ban without an exception to preserve a woman's health. The Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act will ensure that New York State continues to protect and respect women's health and the right to make private reproductive health care decisions.

The Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act will repeal the penal code provisions containing New York's abortion statute, and more properly codify the law in the public health code. This legislation would protect individuals' rights to make private reproductive decisions, including the right to choose or refuse contraception, and the right to choose or refuse to bear a child.

New York State must continue its proud tradition of leadership on issues pertaining to women's health rights.

Family Planning Advocates strongly urges passage of this vital legislation.