

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

New York State Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act S. 5829 (Rules) 2007

WCLA – Choice Matters (Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion – Choice Matters, Inc.), founded on May 7, 1972 and one of the oldest pro-choice organizations in the nation, strongly supports the Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act (the “Act”).

The Act is designed to amend New York State law for the purpose of protecting individuals’ most basic right: the right to make private reproductive health care decisions.

Background

On April 10, 1970, almost three full years before *Roe v. Wade* was decided, the New York State Assembly passed, by a single vote, the motion to amend the state’s century-old ban on abortion. This law was passed in order to ensure that women could avail themselves of safe and legal reproductive health care options.

Effective July 1, 1970, abortion became a decision to be made solely by a woman and her doctor.

Argument

1. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, handed down on April 18, 2007, upheld the first federal ban *ever* on an abortion procedure; it did not include an exception to preserve a woman’s health. Given the fundamental elements incorporated in the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the April 18th decision sets a dangerous precedent.
2. Significant medical advancements have occurred since 1970. Until now, there seemed no need to amend New York State law because it was interpreted to be in full agreement with federal Constitutional law as it applied to the original *Roe v. Wade* decision. However, it is now time to incorporate the important medical advancements made over the past 37 years, and to ensure that New York State continues to protect the right of all women to make safe reproductive health care decisions.
3. The Act will streamline New York State law by properly codifying reproductive rights law in the public health code, while repealing it from the penal code provisions.

Conclusion

New York State has been at the forefront of protecting women’s reproductive rights for years. It is essential that New York State legislators continue this important role, started so many years ago.

WCLA – Choice Matters calls upon you to show your support for women’s reproductive rights by passing this vital legislation, the NYS Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act.