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Legislation Protects Access to Care and Strengthens Safeguards Against Out-Of-State Legal Actions



TRENTON – Governor Mikie Sherrill today signed legislation strengthening protections for patients seeking and healthcare professionals providing reproductive healthcare services in New Jersey. The legislation also expands New Jersey’s existing Shield Law protections to include gender-affirming care, protecting patients and providers from malicious out-of-state legal actions.

“We have seen attacks from the Trump Administration and other states on access to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare, and attempts to impose restrictions across state borders. Here in New Jersey, we are standing firm in defense of reproductive freedoms – including the right to choose and the right to receive gender-affirming care,” **said Governor Mikie Sherrill**. “No one should fear intimidation or violence for seeking healthcare, and no healthcare professional should fear punishment from another state for providing care that is legal in New Jersey. With this legislation, we are making clear that New Jersey will protect patients, providers, and the fundamental freedom to make personal healthcare decisions.”

The legislation, [S2260/A2218](#), signed today expands existing protections for reproductive healthcare patients and providers. New protections include:

- **Helping patients physically access care** by making it a crime to injure, threaten, intimidate, or physically block patients or providers, or to damage property in an effort to interfere with reproductive healthcare services;
- **Empowering patients and providers** by allowing them to take legal action against individuals who interfere with their access to or delivery of protected care; and
- **Protecting healthcare providers** from professional penalties or adverse actions involving their medical malpractice insurance for providing reproductive healthcare that is legal in New Jersey.

The legislation also expands New Jersey’s shield laws by expressly including gender-affirming care in the definition of protected reproductive healthcare services. This extends existing protections to patients seeking and providers delivering gender-affirming care in New Jersey. These protections include:

- **Protecting patient information** related to reproductive healthcare from disclosure without prior authorization, as provided by law;
- **Restricting State entities from assisting certain out-of-state investigations or legal proceedings** that seek to impose liability for providing or receiving protected reproductive healthcare; and
- **Protecting professional licenses** by preventing licensing boards from taking action against a provider solely for providing protected reproductive healthcare.

Today’s actions build on the Sherrill Administration’s work to protect and expand access to reproductive healthcare. The Administration is helping residents find care and understand their rights through the State’s [Reproductive Health Information Hub](#); challenging overreach and extremism by the Trump Administration that threatens access to care; and investing more than \$52 million in family planning services and reproductive health access in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

“New Jersey is committed to protecting bodily autonomy and access to medical care for all,” **said Attorney General Jennifer Davenport**. “This law ensures that anyone seeking or providing reproductive or gender-affirming health services in our state can do so without fear of harassment or punishment.”

“For healthcare to be effective, it must feel safe. That means protecting patients and protecting the providers who care for them,” **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Raynard E. Washington**. “New Jersey will not stand by when proven, effective healthcare is politicized, demonized, or undermined. People deserve the freedom to access and provide evidence-based medical care without fear of intimidation or persecution.”

Sponsors of the legislation include Senate Majority Leader Teresa M. Ruiz and Senate President Nick Scutari, along with Assemblymembers Shanique Speight, Ellen Park, Annette Quijano, and Luanne Peterpaul. The legislation takes effect immediately.

“New Jerseyans receiving or providing reproductive care should feel confident that when they enter an exam room in our state, they are fully protected under the law,” **said Senate President Nick Scutari.** “By shielding patients and doctors from efforts to undermine their bodily autonomy and medical expertise, we are strengthening New Jersey’s commitment to accessible, safe, and evidence-based reproductive health care services.”

“Through our work in the Legislature we have made it abundantly clear that in New Jersey health care decisions belong to patients and their families and I commend each of the sponsors for their hard work and thoughtful leadership,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin.** “As others make cruel attempts to walk back or challenge the kinds of care that every patient deserves, we in New Jersey, continue to stand up for the freedom and dignity that allows people to make the decisions that are right for them. This law strengthens the protections we have on the books here to make sure that people who seek lawful care can do so without the fear and without intimidation or interference.”

“Amid efforts across the country to restrict reproductive and gender-affirming care, today’s signing of this shield law marks the culmination of two years of relentless advocacy and courage. Often in the face of fear and uncertainty, parents, medical professionals, and patients of all ages bravely shared their experiences to remind New Jersey of the humanity at the heart of this law — that no matter our differences, everyone deserves access to the care they need without harassment, and no doctor should face punishment for providing lawful treatment,” **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz.** “These are deeply personal decisions that should be made privately — not criminalized, politicized, or reduced to a culture-war talking point. Every person deserves control over their own body, and I thank Governor Sherrill for being an ally in the fight to advance health equity, defend individual liberties, and protect the freedom to seek and provide care without fear.”

“Health care decisions belong to patients and their providers,” **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight.** “By establishing safeguards for those involved in the provision of reproductive health care services, this reinforces New Jersey’s commitment to ensuring access to essential care and preventing barriers that can disrupt the delivery of legally protected health services. Every individual should be able to engage in the delivery of reproductive health care without fear, delay, or intimidation.”

“Today, New Jersey chose dignity over fear, compassion over cruelty. Today, New Jersey chose to protect its people,” **said Assemblywoman Luanne Peterpaul.**

What They’re Saying

“With the passage of the Shield Bill, we are stepping out of the temporary and into the permanent, replacing executive orders with strong statutory protections. The Transgender Rights Coalition of New Jersey is proud to have fought for a firewall around New Jersey that protects providers and ensures transgender people can access lawful healthcare without fear of out-of-state interference or political retaliation. As a transgender woman, I know these protections are more than words on a page; they give our community greater freedom to live our lives without fear,” **said Simone Kraus, Steering Committee member, Transgender Rights Coalition of New Jersey.**

"This bill recognizes what we all know to be true, reproductive healthcare is essential healthcare! By signing this bill, Governor Sherrill ensures patients and providers in New Jersey are protected from out-of-state threats or retaliation. We could not be more grateful to her and her team,” **said Roslyn Rogers Collins, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey.**

“Today is a historic day in New Jersey. The signing of S2260/A2218 sends a message to the country that in New Jersey we protect reproductive and gender affirming health care. This legislation will ensure that everyone can access the care that they need safely and with dignity. 20 states across the country ban or severely restrict access to abortion. With this signing, New Jersey is standing up as a beacon of hope for reproductive health care across the country and ensuring that all patients and providers are protected for exercising their fundamental right to health care. Thank you, Governor Sherrill, Senator Ruiz, Assemblywomen Speight and Peterpaul, and all of the people who worked tirelessly to protect reproductive freedom in New Jersey,” **said Kaitlyn Wojtowicz, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey.**

“Governor Sherrill’s signature is an affirmation of New Jersey’s commitment to protecting patients, families, and healthcare providers. At a moment when reproductive and transgender healthcare are under attack across the country, New Jersey is standing firmly for bodily autonomy and the right to access lawful care without fear or outside interference,” **said Khadijah M. Silver, JD/MPH, Director, Gender Justice and Health Equity, Lawyers for Good Government.**

“The passage of legislation A2218/S2260 is a monumental victory for bodily autonomy and health equity in New Jersey. At the League, we know that all individuals have a fundamental right to reproductive care and gender-affirming services. By securing these critical protections, our state is sending a clear message: patients deserve access the essential services they need, and providers deserve to deliver that care, safely and confidentially, without fear of repercussions. We are deeply grateful to the bill’s sponsors and our partners in the Thrive NJ coalition for their unwavering commitment to protecting health care access for all,” **said Jenifer Groves, President & CEO New Jersey Family Planning League.**

“UU FaithAction NJ applauds Governor Sherrill today as she takes bold action to advance access to reproductive health care here in New Jersey by signing S2260/A2218 into law. In the 4 years since Roe was overturned the ability to access reproductive health care, which includes abortion care and gender affirming care, has been under relentless attack in many states and at the Federal level. But here in NJ Governor

Sherrill and our State Legislators have chosen to lead with courage, to ensure that both patients and their healthcare providers are protected under the law. Unitarian Universalists believe unequivocally that everyone has the fundamental right to access the full spectrum of reproductive health care, which includes gender affirming care and abortion care. Our faith tradition requires us to work toward a society where everyone can receive the care they want and need. We look forward to ongoing work with the Governor and her team to continue to expand access to essential reproductive care for all here in New Jersey,” **said Jami Thall & Carol Loscalzo, Reproductive Justice Task Force UU FaithAction NJ.**

“The Desi Rainbow community in New Jersey thanks Governor Sherrill for signing S2260 into law. At a time when transgender people and cisgender women in the United States are under threat of losing access to life saving healthcare, we are so pleased and grateful that New Jersey will remain a bastion of healthcare access and choice. As South Asian American LGBTQ+ people, their parents and family members, we are very aware of how little safety and freedom there is for our community today. We applaud Governor Sherrill and the NJ Legislature for their role in ensuring that our children and loved ones, our healthcare providers and facilities are free to access life affirming healthcare without interference from politics,” **said Aruna Rao, Executive Director of Desi Rainbow.**

“As South Asian parents raising a transgender son and a cisgender daughter, our culture and values shape how we raise our kids, and this law means we can keep making those decisions as a family, with our doctors, not politicians who've never met us. Our son can keep getting the care that lets him thrive, and our daughter can keep making her own reproductive healthcare decisions,” **said Ankur Gandhi and Vidhi Goel, Desi Rainbow parents.**

“Luminosas Wellness Collective applauds Governor Mikie Sherrill’s signing of critical legislation to protect the providers of New Jersey who offer comprehensive reproductive and gender affirming care, and the patients they serve. At a time when anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ extremists are working harder than ever to end access to critical health care services, including by targeting providers with lawsuits and criminalizing patients and those who support them, New Jersey is affirming its commitment to ensuring that everyone seeking care in this state is treated with dignity and respect. As we prepare to open our own clinic that will offer safe and inclusive reproductive and sexual health services, including abortion and gender-affirming care, we are grateful to know that our patients and staff will be protected from criminalization and harassment. We thank Governor Sherrill, the bill’s sponsors in the legislature, and the many advocates, especially of the Thrive Coalition, who worked hard to achieve this victory,” **said Dr. Kristyn Brandi and Catherine Obando, Founders, Luminosas Wellness Collective.**

“Protecting reproductive freedom means ensuring patients can access care safely and without interference, and providers can deliver that care without risking their freedom or professional license,” **said Christina Chang, Executive Director of The Reproductive Freedom Alliance.** “This legislation reinforces New Jersey as a safe place for people to seek the care they need by shielding patients and providers from harassment and legal retaliation and expanding reproductive health care protections for patients. We are proud to have Governor Sherrill as a member of the Reproductive Freedom Alliance and to stand alongside her in protecting patients, providers and access to care.”

“Governor Sherrill's signing of this bill will guarantee access to medically necessary transgender healthcare and will save lives here in New Jersey. After advocating for these legal protections for so many years, I am thankful for the Governor's leadership and strong support of New Jerseyans like me. Especially given recent actions by our Federal government, I am even more proud to call New Jersey home,” **said Jennifer Williams, Trenton City Councilwoman.**



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