

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Renews Efforts to Secure Reproductive Rights and Bolster Access to Reproductive Health Care in New Jersey

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TRENTON – With the U.S. Supreme Court poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade* – a decision that would have significant consequences for reproductive rights throughout the country – Governor Phil Murphy today announced renewed efforts to secure abortion rights and bolster access to reproductive health care in New Jersey. Alongside partners in the Legislature, the Governor announced legislation to protect and expand coverage for reproductive health care, and protect medical providers and patients who provide or receive abortion care in New Jersey from legal retaliation by states who have outlawed or restricted abortion.

“Revoking the fundamental right to abortion is dangerous and reprehensible, yet the U.S. Supreme Court is nevertheless prepared to proceed with this plan,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Alongside our partners in the Legislature, my Administration has prepared for this eventuality by enshrining the right to reproductive choice into New Jersey law. We refuse to go backwards on this critical issue and, today, our state moves forward in working to secure reproductive rights and ensure access to the reproductive health care every woman deserves.”

“With women’s reproductive rights being chipped away in other parts of the country, here in New Jersey we are not only securing those rights, but we are making it easier for women to maintain control over their bodies,” **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. “The proposed actions being announced today are not only about supporting reproductive health and bodily autonomy, but they are also about creating equity for those with limited resources whose access to essential healthcare may be limited or restricted.”

In January 2022, the Governor signed historic legislation ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/zoz15g/zw5zq7zb/n320qw_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!Ph53WEHNecJEuwGpqr8Yts2vye7soK6qU1awcOMJ5VbKGU-F4dfBbTzvBrKpLlI-31WCSsKARG6GLCKODs\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/zoz15g/zw5zq7zb/n320qw_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!Ph53WEHNecJEuwGpqr8Yts2vye7soK6qU1awcOMJ5VbKGU-F4dfBbTzvBrKpLlI-31WCSsKARG6GLCKODs$)) he had championed alongside legislative supporters, including former Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, to protect the constitutional right to freedom of reproductive choice in New Jersey. That legislation codified reproductive rights into state law, including the right to access contraception and the right to terminate a pregnancy. The legislation announced today reintroduces aspects of the original bill draft that were not included in the final act signed into law.

The reintroduced provisions aim to provide equitable access by requiring private insurers to provide coverage for abortion without cost-sharing and codifying into state into recent regulatory changes to expand New Jersey’s pool of potential abortion providers to include advanced practice nurses, midwives, and physician assistants.

With many other states prepared to criminalize abortions, the legislation announced today will take steps to protect those seeking or providing abortions in New Jersey from legal retaliation. Under the bill, public entities would be prohibited from cooperating with interstate investigations into the provision or receipt of reproductive health care. The legislation will also establish a way to allow a person in New Jersey who is successfully sued in another state for their involvement in reproductive health care to file suit to recover damages resulting from that initial lawsuit.

The Governor also announced his intent to create a new Reproductive Health Access Fund to support access to reproductive health care for uninsured and underinsured women, clinical training grants to expand the number of health care providers with abortion training, and funding to help cover the costs of necessary security measures to protect at-risk health care sites.

“Overturning nearly half a century of precedent and abolishing reproductive rights for millions of Americans will cause immeasurable harm to the health of women throughout our nation,” **said Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz**. “In New Jersey, we will continue to lead with our values as we solidify a woman’s right to her dignity and body autonomy. We cannot afford to backslide to a time when women were not treated equally under the law.”

“Now more than ever, we must unequivocally protect the fundamental right of reproductive choice,” **said Senator Sandra Cunningham**. “The attack on reproductive freedom at the federal level does not reflect the values of the people of New Jersey, including the principle of equal treatment for women. It is critical that we meet the moment and secure access to essential health care throughout the state.”

“We have seen that the overwhelming majority of Americans support reproductive rights enshrined in *Roe v. Wade*,” **said Senator Nellie Pou**. “In New Jersey, we will continue to reflect the values of our state and our nation as we advocate for women’s rights and their access to health care.”

“Ensuring a woman’s right to choose is essential to advancing equality in our state,” **said Senator James Beach**. “Every New Jerseyan and American deserves reproductive rights. We must demonstrate to the rest of the country that New Jersey stands for dignity and freedom.”

“Working New Jerseyans across the state depend on affordable care and services they can readily acquire without excessive burden to their budgets,” **said Senator Gordon Johnson**. “Preserving women’s reproductive rights and maintaining access to reproductive care will advance social justice and help mitigate the devastating impacts of income inequality in our communities.”

“Our state will continue to be a place where all women can exercise their reproductive rights and make these important decisions freely,” **said Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. “I am proud to have sponsored previous legislation that protects these freedoms here in New Jersey and am proud to stand with the Governor today to further build upon our state’s support for this critical issue.”

“As one of the primary sponsors of the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, I am encouraged by Governor Murphy’s unrelenting commitment to protecting women’s reproductive autonomy and ensuring equitable access to medical care regardless of socioeconomic status,” **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji**. “Despite the erosion of women’s rights nationally, New Jersey will remain a state in which women will not be forced by their government into childbirth against their will.”

“As women and their right to choose come under attack across the country, New Jersey must remain a beacon of hope for reproductive freedom in the U.S.,” **said Assemblywoman Carol Murphy**. “I support Governor Murphy’s strides toward making access to reproductive care safer and more affordable at such a critical moment in our nation’s history.”

I applaud Governor Murphy for his commitment to making reproductive care more accessible to the women of New Jersey," **said Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly**. "We are at yet another critical point in our nation's history due to the recent attacks on women's reproductive rights. I believe that history will show that New Jersey was on the right side of things."

"The attacks on reproductive health will create potential seismic shifts in policy which may lead to draconian measures with health consequences for women. Much of this has been proven in the past," **said Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter**. "Banning abortions will radically affect victims of sexual violence and will disproportionately affect poor and working-class individuals. The alarm has been sounded and we must galvanize here in New Jersey. Limiting the reproductive freedom of women is a real and urgent threat."

"Reproductive health care decisions rightly belong to women who must be free to consult with their physician and others who support them," **said Assemblyman Herb Conaway**. "If states are allowed to criminalize this essential right, the health and safety of countless Americans will be put at risk. New Jersey must continue to protect those who provide and receive reproductive health care and work to expand access to reproductive healthcare for those seeking such care in our state."

"A lack of coverage can often be the one thing standing between a woman and the reproductive care she needs," **said Assemblyman John McKeon**. "Defending the right to reproductive care in New Jersey must include expanding coverage for these critical services."

"Women throughout our country have had the right to make their own reproductive choices for nearly five decades, but now those critical freedoms are at risk," **said Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker**. "By expanding access to reproductive health care and strengthening protections for the people who need it the most, our state will serve as a safe place for women in these difficult times."

"Bolstering access to reproductive care in New Jersey is a matter of equity," **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight**. "With women of color facing greater barriers to access, New Jersey must work to make it possible for every woman to receive the reproductive care they need."

"I do not promote abortions; I promote a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. My great aunt died during a back-alley abortion," **said Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake**. "Reversing Roe v. Wade is only going to result in our country's daughters risking hemorrhage, partially born babies, and sterilization just to keep her autonomy. That is why I was a co-sponsor of the NJ Reproductive Freedom Act."

"In New Jersey, we are proud that all people are guaranteed equal protection under the law and that extends to a woman's right to choose," **said Assemblyman Paul Moriarty**. "As women's health is under attack, we must create a pathway to affordable and accessible health care for all New Jerseyans."

"New Jersey has often served as a model for the rest of the country to follow, and our state has the opportunity to don that mantle yet again as we strive to expand – rather than limit – reproductive freedom," **said Assemblyman William Spearman**. "Governor Murphy's announcement today reinforces New Jersey's leadership in the protection and promotion of a woman's right to choose."

"Protecting reproductive rights and expanding access to care has never been more important," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "It is our responsibility as representatives to make sure New Jersey secures these rights on behalf of every woman in our state, no matter what happens at the federal level."

"Attempts to control or limit a woman's reproductive choices run counter to the freedoms our nation represents," **said Assemblyman Daniel Benson**. "New Jersey continues to stand in defense of reproductive rights, including doing all we can to support anyone providing or seeking an abortion in our state."

"Advancing equity in our state means safeguarding health for all New Jersey women, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status," **said Assemblywoman Annette Chaparro**. "Especially in our urban communities, women depend on reproductive care that is safe, accessible, and affordable."

"Reproductive rights are crucial for all women, including the low-income and working community members who drive our local economies," **said Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli**. "Ensuring the affordability and accessibility of reproductive care will further promote economic opportunity and justice in New Jersey."

"Revoking this fundamental right will inflict untold suffering on our most vulnerable – low-income women and women of color," **said Assemblywoman Ellen Park**. "At a time when we need to be expanding health care access for our most vulnerable five people with lifetime appointments are determined to limit it. If this opinion becomes a decision, it will be a shameful day in America, but New Jersey will continue to stand for reproductive rights."

"Access to reproductive health care is essential to equity and economic justice," **said Assemblyman William Sampson**. "Together, we must ensure that every woman has the right to make decisions about her health, her life, and her future. I am thankful for the Governor's continued advocacy and leadership as we fight to uphold these fundamental rights."

"A woman's reproductive choices are hers, and hers alone. Due to the recent attacks on reproductive rights at the federal level, we now have a choice of our own to make as well; to either stand by and allow the rights of millions of women to be taken away, or to take action and protect those rights," **said Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. "Today, Governor Murphy chose to take action. I support his decision to make reproductive care more accessible, not only to the women of our state, but to women across our country."

"Despite the leaked draft opinion - which if final, shows the Supreme Court turning its back on the fundamental right to abortion, we believe that everyone should be able to safely access the health care they need to plan their families - without barriers, bias, fears, or interference from others," **said the Thrive NJ Coalition** (<https://www.thrive-nj.com/?msclid=d02d7123d0a311ec98db70142f6cd71e>). "Throughout our advocacy for abortion access in New Jersey, our coalition has led with one guiding principle: that rights, without access, are meaningless. Now that we have secured and safeguarded our right to abortion care in New Jersey, we look forward to working with Governor Murphy in this urgent moment to meaningfully expand access to care - so that everyone, regardless of income, insurance coverage, or immigration status - can receive the care they need and deserve. New Jerseyans can't wait."

"The language in the leaked draft SCOTUS opinion makes it clear that it is the intention of some justices to continue their attacks further on abortion access. This case could have potential implications for freedom of other realms of bodily autonomy like birth control and gender affirming care as well as freedoms of who to marry," **said Dr. Kristyn Brandi, an ob/gyn who provides abortion care in New Jersey and is Board Chair of Physicians for Reproductive Health**. "That's why today's legislation is so critical for our collective health and wellbeing: New Jersey would ensure that no matter what the Courts decide, we will have access to abortion coverage without concerns of insurance coverage, access to birth control, and access to prenatal care. I am proud to live and practice in a state that acknowledges that attacks on abortion are attacks on ALL of our reproductive health care."

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