

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Protect Reproductive Health Care Providers and Out-of-State Residents Seeking Reproductive Services in New Jersey

07/1/2022

**TRENTON** – With abortion expected to become illegal or heavily restricted in about half of all states now that the U.S. Supreme Court has overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Governor Phil Murphy today signed two bills to protect individuals who receive and provide reproductive health care services in New Jersey.

“While others throughout the country are revoking a woman’s right to reproductive freedom, New Jersey will continue to defend this fundamental right in our state,” **said Governor Murphy**. “By bolstering protections against potential repercussions for both health care professionals and patients, we are sending a message to all who seek or provide reproductive health care within our borders that we welcome and support you. These laws represent our commitment to standing by a woman’s right to make her own decisions about her body, and will serve to make our state a beacon of freedom to every woman in America.”

“While the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs* may be among the most devastating and profoundly wrong rulings in American history, it will not stop us from using every available tool to continue protecting the right to choose,” **said Acting Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. “These two critical laws further our commitment to protecting abortion rights for New Jersey residents and anyone else who comes to our State seeking care. These laws also provide critical protections for health care providers and for patients’ privacy. I am grateful for Governor Murphy’s commitment to protecting women’s rights and reproductive freedom, and I am grateful to the Legislature for passing these important bills.”

The legislation establishes protections for patients and providers. For patients, the legislation helps ensure residents of other states who seek reproductive health care in New Jersey can access confidential care without fear of prosecution. For providers, the legislation insulates healthcare practitioners from New Jersey-initiated disciplinary actions based on the provision of reproductive health care, including abortion, that is legal in New Jersey.

The first bill (A-3975/S-2633) would generally prevent the disclosure of a patient’s medical records related to reproductive health care without their consent in any civil, probate, legislative or administrative proceeding. It would also prohibit public entities and employees from cooperating with interstate investigations aiming to hold someone liable for seeking, receiving, facilitating, or providing reproductive health care services that are legal in New Jersey.

It would further protect providers by prohibiting New Jersey licensing boards from suspending, revoking, or refusing to renew the license or registration of a professional based solely on their involvement in the provision of reproductive health care services.

The second bill (A-3974/S-2642) would prevent the extradition of an individual within New Jersey to another state for receiving, providing, or facilitating reproductive health care services that are legal in New Jersey.

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Primary sponsors of both bills include Senators Nia Gill, Nellie Pou, and Gordon Johnson, and Assembly members Lisa Swain, Mila Jasey, and Raj Mukherji.

"Last week, the Supreme Court took a drastic step backwards by repealing a landmark decision that was the cornerstone for protecting reproductive freedom in America. This decision has been the catalyst for continued efforts to enact more robust laws that amplify and defend a woman's right to choose in New Jersey," **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz**. "Because of the provisions that are being enacted today, the ability to seek out and receive safe and legal reproductive health services will become a guaranteed right for all who wish to access them in our state. While this does not change the tragic reality for many individuals living in places where reproductive rights have been stripped away, anyone who chooses to come to New Jersey and receive an abortion will be safeguarded from facing criminal charges in their home state. I am proud to lead and govern in a state where the value and importance of ensuring the right to choose is prioritized and respected."

"I would like to thank the Governor for signing these key measures to protect the right for anyone to receive an abortion in this State into law today," **said Senator Nia Gill**. "The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade has left millions of women devastated, as their right to make their own health decisions is now in jeopardy. With this legislation in place, anyone, regardless of where they are from, can receive reproductive health services in this state and will be protected under New Jersey State Law. Our state has a duty to defend those engaging in their reproductive rights from punitive out-of-state restrictions on their freedoms, and I am happy to say that the right to choose is a sacred right for all in New Jersey."

"The Supreme Court's ruling overturning Roe v. Wade notwithstanding, we in New Jersey believe that questions and decisions regarding a person's reproductive health care and well-being are private, and should be best left to the individual and their provider. These bills are meant to bolster that basic right to access quality and safe reproductive health care to all New Jersey residents, and also to protect those from outside who might come to our state seeking health services that are unavailable to them at home," **said Senator Nellie Pou**. "The fundamental right to privacy that was part of the original Roe decision is still relevant today, and is also integral to these new laws that will offer basic protection for those seeking and those administering reproductive health care in New Jersey."

"Access to reproductive health services are vital to a woman's overall health and well-being. In the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling in the Dobbs case, we must continue to do all we can to protect people's health-care choices," **said Senator Gordon Johnson**. "While persons in New Jersey are guaranteed the right to make decisions about their bodies and health, this legislation affords those same protections for persons coming from out-of-State."

"We acted in January of this year with a preemptive strike to ensure New Jersey women are not affected by the whims of Scotus and their overturning of Roe v. Wade," **said Assemblywoman Lisa Swain**. "Women and their doctors are the only individuals necessary to make choices about their bodies and reproductive health. This new law aims to protect medical professionals who provide reproductive healthcare services in New Jersey that is in violation of any other state's laws and prohibits the use of extradition. We will continue to protect women and ensure they can make their own medical decisions partnered with their doctors."

"Many states have already enacted laws that will prohibit a woman's right to make personal decisions with her doctor about her health care," **said Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. "We've enacted to allow here in New Jersey to ensure women's rights are protected. This new law is another step."

"With certain states taking radical steps such as allowing civil litigation against New Jersey physicians and healthcare personnel for providing reproductive healthcare and reaching outside their borders to criminalize travel to our state by women availing themselves of fundamental rights protected under New Jersey law, we must act to protect a woman's control over her own bodily autonomy and future," **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji**. "New Jersey will not extradite women or healthcare providers who are criminally charged under unjust, overreaching laws in another state for protected activities occurring within our state. New Jersey will protect the sacrosanct privacy of people's medical records, and we will not cooperate with efforts to harass our medical providers through extraterritorial litigation for conduct occurring squarely within our borders which falls squarely within our laws."

"Reproductive freedom is a human right, and everyone deserves the opportunity to safely access reproductive health care without facing unjust retaliation," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "New Jersey has not only enshrined the right to reproductive freedom into State law on behalf of our own residents, we are also working to make reproductive care available to residents of other states who come here for these crucial services."

"In these troubling times, we must defend reproductive freedom and be a safe haven for women who are seeking the reproductive care they need," **said Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. "Protecting private patient information and prohibiting professional retaliation against providers are key ways we can work towards this worthy goal."

“Everyone should be able to make their own personal health care decisions – without fear, intimidation, stigma, or delay. New Jersey continues to be a national leader, by passing legislation like S2633/A3975 and S2642/A3974, when it comes to protecting the right to abortion care,” **said Kaitlyn Wojtowicz, Vice President of Public Affairs, Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey.** “We are thankful that leadership, the state legislature, and Governor Murphy have taken swift action to protect patients and providers in New Jersey, and we look forward to continuing the work to ensure that every New Jerseyan can access the care they need, including by passing S2918/A4350 as soon as possible.

## Governor Phil Murphy

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