

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces Women's Health Protection Act to protect equal access to reproductive rights nationwide

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U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin Introduces Women's Health Protection Act to Protect Equal Access to Reproductive Rights Nationwide

Legislation would safeguard against anti-abortion laws like Mississippi's 15-week ban to be argued in front of the Supreme Court next year

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] - U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) joined U.S. Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA), Lois Frankel (D-FL), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), and Veronica Escobar (D-TX) to introduce the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA), bicameral federal legislation to guarantee equal access to abortion, everywhere across the country. The bill's introduction follows the Supreme Court's decision to hear arguments in a case that directly threatens fifty years of precedent protecting access to abortion, and comes as states [like Texas](#) continue to pass anti-choice laws.

Introduced with historic support, the legislation has [48 total co-sponsors](#) in the Senate and [176 total co-sponsors](#) in the House of Representatives.

The Women's Health Protection Act guarantees a pregnant person's right to access an abortion—and the right of an abortion provider to deliver these abortion services—free from medically unnecessary restrictions that interfere with a patient's individual choice or the provider-patient relationship.

From *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 to *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* in 2016, the Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized abortion as a constitutional right. However, anti-abortion advocates have worked for years at the state-level to pass laws meant to undermine or eliminate access to abortion care. In the last decade, state lawmakers have pushed through nearly 500 restrictive laws that make abortion difficult and, sometimes, impossible to access. Just this year, four states have passed bans on abortion at six weeks of pregnancy, before many people even know they're pregnant. Lawmakers in Arkansas and Oklahoma attempted to ban abortion completely. WHPA would stop these attacks and ensure that abortion access first guaranteed under *Roe* is a reality for everyone, everywhere.

"Right now in states across this country, *Roe v. Wade* is under attack and millions of women are at risk of losing the freedom to make their own personal health decisions," **said Baldwin**. "It is past time to stand up to these extreme threats to women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights, which is why I'm championing the Women's Health Protection Act. Every woman, regardless of where she lives, deserves the freedom to make her own, personal decisions about her health care, her family and her body."

"With the Supreme Court set to consider a direct attack on *Roe* and as emboldened and extremist lawmakers viciously attack women's reproductive rights in statehouses across the nation, the Women's Health Protection Act has never been more urgent or more necessary," **Blumenthal said**. "These demagogic and draconian laws hurt women and families as they make personal and difficult medical decisions. This issue is about more than health care, it's about human rights—all our rights. I'm proud to join this historic coalition of lawmakers in

introducing the Women's Health Protection Act and look forward to taking the next step towards seeing it passed into law by holding a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Constitution Subcommittee on the bill next week."

"The fight to protect abortion rights for all Americans is more critical than ever now that the Supreme Court has agreed to hear a challenge to the Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks, in a direct challenge to the constitutional protections established by *Roe v. Wade*," **said Chu**. "This is part of a deliberate strategy by anti-abortion extremists to use state laws and the courts to slowly chip away at abortion access, with nearly 500 restrictive laws introduced in states since just 2011. That is why we need the Women's Health Protection Act to ensure that no matter where you live, what your background is, or what your zip code, you have the same rights to make decisions about your own body as anyone else."

"We need to trust women to make important decisions about their own reproductive destinies," **said Frankel**. "The Women's Health Protection Act will take the power to make these deeply personal medical decisions out of Governors' mansions and state legislatures and put it back where it belongs: in the hands of patients and persons they trust."

"This bill is bold, responsive, and timely legislation that would codify a person's right to choose, free from government interference, and affirm abortion care as the fundamental human right that it is," **said Pressley**. "I am grateful to my colleagues and our advocates for their partnership on this bill, and look forward to continuing to organize, mobilize, and legislate until this bill is passed and the ink dries on President Biden's signature."

"For decades, extremist lawmakers have worked relentlessly to turn back the clock and restrict women's health and reproductive rights," **said Escobar**. "In Texas, Republicans recently passed one of the most draconian laws in the country to ban abortions as early as six weeks – before most women even know they are pregnant, and without making any exceptions for victims of rape or incest. We must urgently

pass the Women's Health Protection Act to preserve women's access to safe and legal abortions everywhere."

The text of the Senate bill – including the full list of cosponsors – is [available here](#). The text of the House bill – including the [full list of cosponsors](#) – is [available here](#).

"The [majority of voters](#) want abortion protected under federal law," **said Nancy Northup, President and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights**. "We cannot wait any longer. If Roe falls, many states will immediately take action to make abortion a crime. Even now, with constitutional protections in place, state legislators have made it impossible to access abortion in the South and Midwest. Especially for Black people and other people of color who already face barriers to health care. This bill—WHPA—would protect against the hundreds of state restrictions and bans that have pushed abortion out of reach. This is an issue of equal access, everywhere."

"Abortion access is a racial and economic justice issue. The legacy of restrictions on reproductive health care has perpetuated white supremacy and anti-Black racism. Restrictions on abortion compound harm for members of communities that have historically experienced barriers to health care — namely people of color, queer and trans folks, and those working to make ends meet. We appreciate that the Women's Health Protection Act bill language recognizes that Reproductive Justice is a human right and that every individual should be able to decide whether and how to have children based on their own circumstances and without interference or discrimination," **said Danielle Hurd-Wilson (they/them), Interim Deputy Director of Field and Programs at URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity**. "The future I want to see is one where anyone can get an abortion with dignity and without barriers. The Women's Health Protection Act would help cut the tangled web of restrictions that anti-abortion politicians have enacted to shame and stigmatize our decisions and deny us timely health care."

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