

Wisconsin Legislature: Democrats unveil the RESPECT Act

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The RESPECT Act ensures people in Wisconsin have access to comprehensive healthcare and medically accurate information.

Madison - Today Democratic legislators released the RESPECT Act, a pair of bills that ensure patients have access to comprehensive reproductive health services and receive medically accurate information from healthcare providers.

The decision to end or continue a pregnancy is one of the most personal, private decisions of our lives. Every person should be able to make these decisions without political interference. Despite this, Wisconsin legislators have passed laws that restrict access to abortion care and mandate that doctors force biased, non-medical information on patients. These laws interfere with the doctor-patient relationship, contravene science, prevent good medical practice, and harm patients. Political interference in personal health care decisions undermines patient health.

The **RESPECT Act** restores the rights of Wisconsinites to make their own reproductive health care decisions, free from harassment, intimidation, political interference, and false information.

Reproductive justice leaders in the legislature and community issued the statements below upon circulation of the bills.

Sen. Kelda Roys, 26th Senate District:

"We all have the right to autonomy over our own body and life. For too long, anti-choice legislators and judges have forced their narrow values on the rest of us, making it as difficult and expensive as possible to receive abortion care.

Restrictions on reproductive healthcare disproportionately affect those who are already marginalized, including people of color, young people, poor people, and people who live in rural areas, among others. The RESPECT Act bill restores access to abortion care and demands that patients receive the same high standard of care and honesty that they would in any other medical setting.

Senator LaTonya Johnson, 6th Senate District:

“The RESPECT Act protects Wisconsinites’ fundamental right to medically accurate information. There is no reason that patients should have to endure intimidation and political interference when it comes to accessing reproductive healthcare. It’s time to put healthcare decisions back in the hands of patients and their doctors by removing these politically driven and unnecessary restrictions.”

Rep. Francesca Hong, 76th Assembly District:

“Fertility care and family planning are freedoms every public servant should be working to uphold. With the RESPECT ACT, individuals and families of all identities will have access to medically accurate information and reproductive care. I am honored to co-author and re-introduce the RESPECT ACT as the 76th district understands that reproductive healthcare is a human right.”

Tehmina Islam, Licensed Midwife - Access Midwifery, LLC:

“I’m deeply grateful that our legislators are fighting to uphold the rights of women and childbearing people regarding bodily autonomy and access to reproductive healthcare. As a licensed midwife, I send a heartfelt, fierce thank you to Senator Roys, Senator Johnson, and Rep. Hong for standing beside individuals to make the most informed, safe choices for themselves and standing beside health care providers to provide informed, unbiased care. We harm patients and communities as a whole when we restrict reproductive choices.”

Sara Finger, WAWH Founder and Executive Director:

“The political games being played with the health and lives of Wisconsinites should be considered legislative malpractice. As our leaders refuse to listen to the medical experts, the evidence, and the cries of patients to determine their own futures, we must speak out and demand support for the RESPECT Act.”

Mike Murray, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin:

“On December 1, the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing oral arguments in a case that could determine the future of abortion access both in Wisconsin and across the country. If Roe v. Wade were to be overturned, abortion could immediately become a crime in Wisconsin impacting 1,274,000 people of reproductive age in Wisconsin. We are witnessing the greatest threat to abortion access in nearly 50 years. Deciding if or when to become a parent is one of the most personal and life-changing decisions many people will make.