U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Leads 47 Members in introducing legislation to restore and protect Americans' right to an abortion nationwide

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WASHINGTON, D.C. –Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) led 47 members of the Senate Democratic caucus in introducing the *Women's Health Protection Act of 2023*, federal legislation to guarantee access to abortion, everywhere across the country and restore the right to comprehensive reproductive health care for millions of Americans. The bill's introduction follows the Supreme Court's misguided decision in *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization* which repealed *Roe v. Wade*. This decision has stripped access to abortion care for millions of Americans and denied individuals the freedom to make their own health care decisions. Since the *Dobbs* decision, 14 states have already implemented near-total abortion bans, leaving [one in three](#) American women without access to safe, legal abortion care. Additionally, state legislatures across the country have introduced [hundreds of bills](#) to include medically unnecessary restrictions that limit access to abortion care.

The *Women's Health Protection Act* creates federal rights for patients and providers to protect abortion access and creates federal protections against medically unnecessary restrictions that undermine Americans' access to health care and intrude upon personal decision-making.

"Right now, in Wisconsin and across the country, Americans are being denied their right to control their bodies, families, and futures. In Wisconsin, women are living in 1849, where a near-total abortion ban that pre-dates the Civil War is in effect that is putting women's health and well-being in jeopardy," **said**

Senator Baldwin. "Every American deserves the freedom to make their own health care decisions without interference from politicians, and Wisconsinites overwhelmingly agree. The *Women's Health Protection Act* isa necessary step to restore Americans' constitutional right to choose what's best for their families and allow doctors to do the job they are trained to do – all free from medically unnecessary restrictions."

"The Women's Health Protection Act would reverse the death sentence handed down to American women when the Supreme Court overturned fifty years of precedent in Roe. The heart of the Women's Health Protection Act is reproductive justice – the fundamental right to safely choose if or when to have children, and the freedom to make that choice no matter who you are or where you live," **said Senator Blumenthal.** "It will reverse the draconian and devastating bans and restrictions that fall on all women, and disproportionately on Black and Latina people, individuals with lower incomes, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and so many others who face barriers to care. This issue is about more than health care; it is about women's rights, individual rights, and human rights."

"With the MAGA Supreme Court and Republican-held state legislatures attacking abortion rights across the country, the Women's Health Protection Act would codify the fundamental right to an abortion into federal law," **said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY).** "This unprecedented list of cosponsors from Senate Democrats shows a stark contrast to Senate Republicans who are united in their goal to rip away the right to choose. In too many corners of America today, the far right's crusade to stifle the bodily autonomy of pregnant people is leading to disproportionate harm for non-white communities as well as LGBTQ+ communities. This legislation writes into law that reproductive freedom and access to basic health care should be available to every American, not subject to the whims of an extreme party whose beliefs are out of step with a majority of Americans."

Following the *Dobbs* decision in June of last year, millions of Americans in states like Wisconsin are unable to make their own health care decisions. Patients are being denied or delayed access to necessary and potentially life-saving treatment, including for ectopic pregnancies and miscarriage management, because of new legal risks to providers. And, the harms caused by these abortion restrictions fall heaviest on populations that already experience inequities, including people with low incomes, people of color, immigrants, young people, people with disabilities, and those living in rural and other medically underserved areas.

The *Women's Health Protection Act* would:

- Prohibit states from imposing restrictions that jeopardize access to abortion earlier in pregnancy, including many of the state-level restrictions in place prior to *Dobbs*, such as arbitrary waiting periods, medically unnecessary mandatory ultrasounds, or requirements to provide medically inaccurate information.
- Ensure that later in pregnancy, states cannot limit access to abortion if it would jeopardize the life or health of the mother.
- Protect the ability to travel out of state for an abortion, which has become increasingly common in recent years.

"As Wisconsin's leading reproductive health care provider and advocate, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is grateful to Senator Baldwin for, once again, being a national leader, introducing this proactive, common-sense, life-saving legislation: The Women's Health Protection Act, **said Tanya Atkinson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. "**PPWI sees firsthand the devastating impact on individuals and communities when people's freedoms to make their own healthcare decisions are taken away. SCOTUS' decision to overturn Roe v. Wade resulted in a suspension of abortion services in Wisconsin due to an 1849 Criminal Abortion Ban. While Wisconsin's anti-choice legislative leaders refuse to repeal this pre-civil war ban, Wisconsinites suffer. It's clear that women and people across the country need and deserve the freedom and trust to make their own health care decisions. We support Senator Baldwin and this legislation that will allow for legal protections to provide and access abortion care, free from unnecessary restrictions and bans. The stakes for people's health, lives and futures could not be higher."

"As an obstetrician-gynecologist living in Wisconsin, I have seen firsthand how harmful our state's abortion ban – the oldest in the country – has been to my patients and to my practice," **said Kristin Lyerly, MD, MPH, an OB/GYN from Green Bay, Wisconsin.** "In fact, the criminalization of care means that I can no longer safely provide healthcare for women in my own home state to patients from within my community. I'm grateful to Senator Baldwin for her leadership in returning medical decision-making where it belongs – with my patients."

"Republicans have ushered in a crisis—a nightmare for women, for patients, and for doctors alike—with their nonstop attacks on every woman's reproductive rights. They've passed one extreme abortion ban after the next, and as they fail to

convince the American people to get on board with their extreme agenda, they've tried to force it on women across the country with threats, intimidation, and outrageous lawsuits," **said Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)**. "Democrats refuse to accept that any patient's right to control their own body depends on the state they live in or the money in their bank account. That's why Democrats are reintroducing the Women's Health Protection Act today to put an end to this madness and restore every woman in America's right to control her own body."

"We need to codify the protections that Roe v. Wade gave to American women more than 50 years ago so that freedom to make decisions about reproduction aren't completely dependent on your zip code. The Women's Health Protection Act does this and I am glad to cosponsor," **said Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA).**

"Last year, the Supreme Court issued a ruling shredding nearly five decades of precedent protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. Now, women are at the mercy of a patchwork of state laws governing their ability to access reproductive care," **said Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).** "That's why we must act to codify the protections of Roe v. Wade into law. Our legislation would do just that, ensuring that women, not politicians, are at the helm of making their own personal health care decisions."

"The right-wing-led Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade stripped away the reproductive rights of millions of women across America, threatening their health – and in some cases their lives. This is unacceptable. We need to pass the Women's Health Protection Act to codify Roe and guarantee a woman's right to choose as a matter of law nationwide," **said Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).**

"I stand with the majority of Nevadans and Americans who are pro-choice, and I will never stop fighting to ensure women can make their own health care decisions," **said Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV).** "Women's rights have come under attack since the fall of Roe v. Wade, and it is crucial that we act now to protect reproductive freedom for women across the country."

"As we continue to see attacks on a woman's fundamental freedom, it is critical that we enshrine Roe v. Wade into law by passing the Women's Health Protection Act. Women are capable of making their own health care choices and of knowing what is best for their personal health and safety. This bill will protect the fundamental right of a woman to decide how and when she wants to start a family – a decision that

should be hers alone. I urge my colleagues to join me in standing up for the rights of women," **said Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH).**

"When we push for reproductive freedom and abortion access, we are prioritizing the health and safety of millions of women, especially low-income women and women of color," **said Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).** "I'm proud to help reintroduce the Women's Health Protection Act on this International Women's Day, and I'm determined to continue using my voice to push for women's issues as long as I'm in Congress."

"The decision to have an abortion is a personal health care choice," said Sen. Welch. "It's a decision that should be made by women and their doctors – not by politicians," **said Senator Peter Welch (D-VT)**. "Congress has to act and put that choice back in the hands of women. We must pass the Women's Health Protection Act and restore abortion rights nationwide."

"Last year – for the first time in American history – the Supreme Court stripped away a fundamental right from the American people and denied their individual liberty to make intensely personal choices about their health and futures," **said Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO)**. "Congress must pass the Women's Health Protection Act to codify the right to choose and ensure that every person has safe access to reproductive care, no matter where they live."

"After the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, many women no longer have access to necessary and sometimes lifesaving care," **said Senator Gary Peters (D-MI).** "From my family's own experience, I know how painful it is to face these heartbreaking and complicated situations. That's why passing the Women's Health Protection Act is so important – so women can have the freedom to make their own health care decisions with their doctors, no matter where they live."

"No one – not a lawmaker or unelected jurist should be able to control a woman's decision on when or if to start a family. It should belong to her and her alone without government interference. Republican lawmakers across the country – including those in Concord — have jumped on the reversal of Roe v. Wade and are attacking women's access reproductive health care. We need the Women's Health Protection Act to help ensure that a woman's ability to access the care she needs is not restricted based on her zip code," **said Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).** "I'll keep fighting to protect women's fundamental rights in New Hampshire and across

the nation."

"After the Supreme Court took away women's rights to make decisions about their own bodies, Republicans in Washington introduced a nationwide abortion ban that would even restrict reproductive rights in my state of Nevada," **said Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV)**. "I'll always stand up for a woman's right to choose and fight back against attacks on reproductive freedoms. That's why I'm helping introduce the Women's Health Protection Act to enshrine Roe v. Wade in federal law, protect reproductive rights, and eliminate medically-unnecessary restrictions that make it harder for women to access care."

"When the Supreme Court struck down a woman's fundamental right to abortion health care, it didn't stop women from needing that care. Some women can no longer receive abortion services, and for others abortion care has become much more dangerous, unnecessarily putting their health at risk," **said Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).** "Our bill would codify the protections of Roe, ensuring that all women have access to a safe, legal abortion in the United States."

"The right-wing, ideologically-driven Supreme Court's decision overturning nearly 50 years of precedent by abolishing an individual's right to get an abortion was just the beginning," **said Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI).** "The Dobbs decision opened the doors for extremist Republicans who have made clear they will stop at nothing to control our bodies. As Republicans work to enact a nationwide abortion ban, it has never been more critical that we codify the right to access abortion care for every person in this country. I'm proud to join Senator Baldwin and our colleagues in reintroducing the Women's Health Protection Act to protect the fundamental right of every individual to make decisions about our bodies and our futures."

"After nearly fifty years of established protections, women's reproductive health care is under attack. In states across the country, including Virginia, laws stripping back the right to choose are being introduced and taking effect," **said Senator Mark Warner (D-VA).** "There has never been a more urgent time to pass the Women's Health Protection Act and ensure that women reclaim the right to make their own decisions about their health care."

"Reproductive health care and access to safe abortion services are fundamental rights," **said Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA).** "The Women's Health Protection Act will safeguard reproductive freedoms and ensure that a woman's health care decisions stay between her and her doctor. We must pass this legislation to restore

the rights of millions of Americans to access reproductive health care, regardless of where they live."

"Right now, reproductive health care continues to be attacked all across our country," **said Senator Tom Carper (D-DE**). "The Women's Health Protection Act would ensure women and their doctors, not politicians and judges, make these private health care decisions. I'm proud to once again support this legislation and thank Senators Blumenthal and Baldwin for their leadership."

A full list of co-sponsors and a copy of the bill text is available [here](#).

A one-pager on the bill is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).