



For Immediate Release | May 17, 2011

Katie Kincaid | Kincaid.nysenate@gmail.com | 646.784.0485

Statement From Bipartisan Pro Choice Legislative Caucus on Fight To Pass The Reproductive Health Act

As members of the Bipartisan Pro Choice Legislative Caucus (BPCLC), our goal is to not only protect women's reproductive rights already in place in the State of New York, but to also strengthen them. With this objective in mind, the BPCLC vows to join NARAL, and other pro choice groups, in the fight to pass The Reproductive Health Act.

While New York once led the nation in breaking barriers on behalf of women's reproductive rights, these same laws, which have not been updated in 40 years, are now antiquated and ill serving in modern times. After the nation followed New York in securing a women's right to choose, and even provided greater protections for these rights, our State failed to match this new standard. Instead, New York settled into complacency and left our laws unchanged. Even now, under New York State law, there are inappropriate limitations placed on a woman's ability to terminate her pregnancy in situations that put her health in jeopardy.

The women of New York deserve more. As outlined by the Reproductive Health Act, a woman should have full control over her reproductive health. If a pregnancy puts a women's health at risk, then she should be able to decide whether or not she wishes to move forward with that pregnancy. We can no longer deny women the ability to make a decision that will so greatly affect her life and her health.

There is also no reason for these issues to be regulated under criminal code, as they are now. How can an issue referred to as "Reproductive Health" not be under the jurisdiction of the Public Health Law? It simply does not make sense.

With the passage of the Reproductive Health Act, these archaic laws would be changed and New York would no longer operate under sub-standard regulations.

Make no mistake, these shortfalls leave the women of New York vulnerable to attacks against basic rights that many women have come to take for granted. We can no longer go on assuming that the national protections provided by Roe v. Wade will continue to shield New Yorkers indefinitely. Such assumptions are not only ignorant, they are dangerous as well.

At one point in history New York led the way in protecting women's reproductive rights, it's time to lead again. The Bipartisan Pro Choice Legislative Caucus is dedicated to passing the Reproductive Health Act and ensuring that New York is once again at the forefront in the battle for reproductive rights.

###