



NEWS FROM **SENATOR MAE FLEXER**

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29TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Contact: Dan Doyle
860-240-8633

FEMALE LEGISLATORS CELEBRATE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE v. WADE AND ANNOUNCE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

HARTFORD, CT – After a weekend of Women's March events held around the United States, several of Connecticut's female lawmakers and women's health advocates came together today to celebrate the 45th Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, one of critical landmarks in women's health in United States History. In addition to remarking on this important decision protecting a women's right to choose, the lawmakers announced their intention to introduce several bills establishing protections for women's health in Connecticut. These bills will be designed to defend against the ongoing attempts at the federal level to roll back women's access to necessary health services.

"Connecticut must stand up against attacks from Washington, DC on the healthcare women in our state rely on," said **Senator Mae Flexer**. "I am proud today to stand alongside my female colleagues in honor of the strides made by the women who came before us. We will honor their work this year by continuing it through legislation that will protect and expand upon women's access to basic healthcare for themselves and their children. In particular we must work to end the healthcare disparity that results in less access to care and higher rates of maternal mortality in urban neighborhoods and other underserved communities."

"While the landmark Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion across the United States, we need to do more to ensure women have control and power over their bodies and not the government. Statistics show that black teens are twice as likely as the national average to have abortions; and black women, regardless of their age, are four times more likely to have an abortion. As Republicans continue their efforts to dismantle Roe v. Wade, we need to ensure all women have the power to choose when and if they are going to get pregnant. This starts with improving black women's access to health services, health providers and sex education, and protecting their right to affordable birth control," said **Representative Robyn Porter** (D-New Haven).

"Every single woman should have the right to make her own medical decisions and choose what she wants to do with her body," **Representative Christine Conley** (D-Groton) said. "The landmark Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision was an important victory, but we still have a long way to go in ensuring all women receive comprehensive healthcare. This legislative session, I will continue to be an advocate for all women and fight for their reproductive rights, bodily integrity and privacy, along with their ability to obtain access to safe and legal abortions."

“I am proud to join my colleagues today in standing up for health care rights for women across Connecticut. Women’s health care issues are *family* health care issues and they affect us all,” said **Representative Caroline Simmons** (D-Stamford).

“The bills we are introducing this session continue and strengthen Connecticut’s long commitment to protecting women’s reproductive rights and improving health care access for all,” **Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey** (D-Fairfield) said. “From preserving women’s access to contraception and preventive services to establishing paid family and medical leave, these proposals will help women and their families lead healthier, more financially secure lives.”

“The current federal administration wants to send women back decades. The anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* serves as an important reminder that we can never allow that to happen – not in our state,” **Representative Liz Linehan** (D-Cheshire/Southington/Wallingford) said. “It’s not enough for women to be able to decide if they want to start a family; they must also be able to have children without risking financial ruin or fearing they’ll lose the basic services that keep them and their family healthy.”

"On the anniversary of *Roe* we recognize the importance of every individual being able to make decisions about her own life, body, and future,” said **Sarah Croucher, Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut**. “These freedoms require a range of supportive policies and we are pleased to join with legislators to protect current coverage for birth control, to continue to improve access to contraceptive and other healthcare services, and to protect Connecticut residents seeking real reproductive healthcare from the lies and misinformation of anti-choice crisis pregnancy centers. By working together, we can further expand reproductive freedom in our state.”

The legislators announced their intention to introduce and support the passage of several bills enshrining the women’s health aspects of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law. The passage of these bills will ensure that Connecticut women do not have their healthcare impacted by attempts in Washington DC to repeal the ACA.

10 Essential Benefits

The legislators will introduce a bill ensuring that health insurance plans offered in the state of Connecticut cover the “[10 essential benefits](#)” protected by the ACA. These benefits include outpatient care, as well as hospital care and trips to the emergency room, prenatal care and ongoing care for the baby throughout its childhood, prescription medicine, lab tests, as well as mental health and substance use disorder services.

Women’s Preventative Services

Legislation introduced this session will allow Connecticut to join a growing list of states that protect women’s access to contraception and other preventative health services with no out-of-pocket cost. More than 746,000 women in Connecticut have gained access to birth control with no out-of-pocket costs. There have been multiple attempts at the federal level to roll back this benefit. This change can cost a woman up to \$600 a year, making it unaffordable for those who are already struggling to make ends meet. Increasing these

healthcare costs would worsen the healthcare disparity between poor, underserved communities and other, wealthier parts of the state, contributing to a higher rate of maternal mortality and other health complications.

Building on the ACA's Preventative Coverage

Legislation to be introduced this year will expand on the progress in reproductive health made by the ACA by expanding coverage for contraception. This new legislation will expand coverage for contraception to include 12-month prescription coverage and emergency contraception with no co-pay.

Shedding Light on "Crisis Pregnancy Centers"

Legislation will be introduced this year to ensure that people seeking healthcare advice about a pregnancy are not lied to or shamed by staff at "crisis pregnancy centers" seeking to further a political agenda. Crisis pregnancy centers are organizations that attempt to look like legitimate family planning clinics, while actually providing medically inaccurate, anti-choice information. They target urban neighborhoods and other medically underserved communities where people do not have access to a regular gynecologist.