

## THE WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ACT OF 2023

### *Protecting the Choices and Freedom of Patients and their Doctors*

The Women's Health Protection Act creates federal rights for patients and providers to protect abortion access. The legislation includes federal protections against state restrictions that undermine Americans' access to fundamental health care services and intrude upon personal decision-making. The bill 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 waiting periods or requirements to provide medically inaccurate information. Later in pregnancy, states cannot limit access to abortion if it would jeopardize the life or health of the mother. The bill also protects the ability to travel out of state for an abortion, which has become increasingly common in recent years.

**We need a federal law that puts women's health and rights first. The Women's Health Protection Act does just that.**

On June 24, 2022 an activist, conservative majority of the Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, overruled nearly 50 years of judicial precedent created by *Roe v. Wade* and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*. The Court took away rights relied upon by hundreds of millions of women for half a century to make personal choices about their body, their health, and their families. This decision decimated an already precarious abortion access landscape, and the effects were immediate and disastrous. Since then, 14 states have implemented near-total bans on abortion, with more likely to follow, leaving millions of women without access to abortion in their home states.

**Right now in states across the country, millions of Americans are unable to make their own health care decisions. In overturning *Roe* and passing one extreme state abortion ban after the next, a full-fledged health care crisis has been unleashed that is jeopardizing women's health and forcing them to stay pregnant against their will.**

In the wake of *Dobbs*, 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. Abortion bans and restrictions exacerbate the existing maternal health crisis in the U.S., which has the highest maternal mortality rate of any industrialized nation. These bans lead to reduced access for other essential health care services, including preventive services such as contraceptive services; testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections; LGBTQ health services; and referrals for primary care, domestic violence prevention, prenatal care, and adoption services. 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.

**Congress must pass the Women's Health Protection Act to protect a woman's health, her ability to make her own decisions, and her constitutional rights.**