

STATE OF NEW YORK

348--B

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 4, 2023

Introduced by Sens. CLEARE, RIVERA, COONEY, HINCHEY, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON, SALAZAR, THOMAS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the reproductive freedom and equity grant program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "reproductive freedom and equity grant program".

3 § 2. Legislative findings. The legislature finds:

4 1. Abortion is essential health care and integral to the overall
5 health and wellbeing of individuals.

6 2. In 1970, New York legalized abortion, three years prior to the
7 Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, which enumerated a constitutional
8 right to abortion care.

9 3. On January 22, 2019, the 46th anniversary of the Supreme Court
10 decision Roe v. Wade, New York modernized our state law to be consistent
11 with the holdings of Roe v. Wade, articulating in that every individual
12 has a fundamental right to abortion.

13 4. Despite a state right to abortion care, barriers exist that chal-
14 lenge an individual's ability to exercise their right to care.

15 5. Individuals seeking abortion care can often experience obstacles to
16 obtaining an abortion, whether that is an inability to afford the cost
17 of care, the distance one must travel, the costs associated with travel
18 including transportation needs, childcare, lodging, lost wages and more.

19 6. Barriers to care are often intensified for immigrants, young
20 people, people with disabilities and those living in rural areas.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 7. The United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade on June 24,
2 2022, significantly impacting access to care across the country for
3 millions.

4 8. It is estimated that in the wake of state bans on abortion across
5 the country, New York would be the nearest provider of care for 190,000
6 to 280,000 more women of reproductive age.

7 9. Abortion funds, abortion providers, and other community-based
8 organizations have provided essential support to individuals facing
9 practical support needs. These entities assist individuals seeking
10 abortion care including those living in New York, those traveling to New
11 York and those who must travel outside of New York for care.

12 10. With no direct and sustained state investment, safety-net abortion
13 providers and abortion funds predominately rely on philanthropic giving
14 to address unmet needs of abortion patients, challenging their ability
15 to meet present need, or any future increase demand for care.

16 11. New York has a proud legacy of protecting and expanding access to
17 comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care services, including
18 abortion.

19 12. In furtherance of that legacy, it is incumbent upon the state to
20 adopt bold and innovative programs and policies that protect and advance
21 reproductive freedom.

22 § 3. Article 25-A of the public health law is amended by adding a new
23 section 2599-bb-1 to read as follows:

24 § 2599-bb-1. Reproductive freedom and equity grant program. 1. As used
25 in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

26 (a) "Abortion" shall mean the termination of pregnancy pursuant to
27 section twenty-five hundred ninety-nine-bb of this article.

28 (b) "Medical services" shall mean the range of care related to the
29 provision of abortion.

30 (c) "Practical support" shall mean direct assistance to enable a
31 person to obtain abortion care, including but not limited to ground and
32 air transportation, gas money, lodging, meals, childcare, translation
33 services, and doula support.

34 (d) "Program" shall mean the reproductive freedom and equity grant
35 program.

36 2. There is hereby established in the department a reproductive free-
37 dom and equity grant program to ensure access to abortion care in the
38 state. Such program shall provide funding to abortion providers, govern-
39 ment entities and non-profit organizations whose primary function is to
40 facilitate access to abortion care. The program is designed to provide
41 support to abortion providers to increase access to care, fund uncompen-
42 sated care, and to address the support needs of individuals accessing
43 abortion care. The governor shall include an appropriation in the exec-
44 utive budget or identify funding that can be used to support the
45 program.

46 3. The commissioner is authorized to distribute funds made available
47 for expenditure pursuant to this section. In determining funding for
48 applicants under the grant program, the commissioner shall consider the
49 following criteria and goals:

50 (a) Increase access to care by growing the capacity of abortion
51 providers to meet present and future care needs. Funds shall be awarded
52 to support the recruitment and retention of staff, patient navigators,
53 staff training, the establishment of new or renovation of existing
54 health centers, investments in technology to facilitate care, security
55 enhancements, and other operational needs that reflect the intention of
56 increasing access to abortion care.

1 (b) Fund uncompensated care, to ensure the affordability of and access
2 to care for anyone who seeks care in the state, regardless of their
3 ability to pay for care. Funds shall be awarded to abortion providers,
4 government entities and non-profit entities to support uncompensated
5 costs of the medical services associated with abortion care for individ-
6 uals who lack insurance coverage, are underinsured, or whose insurance
7 is deemed unusable by the rendering provider.

8 (c) Address practical support needs of individuals accessing abortion
9 care. Funds shall be awarded to non-profit entities providing practical
10 support to individuals within and traveling to the state.

11 4. In establishing and operating the program, the department shall
12 consult a range of experts including but not limited to individuals and
13 entities providing abortion care, abortion funds and other organizations
14 whose mission is to expand access to abortion care, to ensure the
15 program structure and expenditures are reflective of the needs of
16 abortion providers, abortion funds and consumers. The department shall
17 promulgate regulations necessary for implementation of the program.

18 5. The department shall not request, promulgate regulations to, or
19 otherwise require, any abortion provider or non-profit organization
20 receiving monies from the program to divulge the name, address, photo-
21 graph, license number, email address, phone number, or any other
22 personally identifying information of any patient, or individual who
23 sought or received practical support from such provider or organization,
24 in conjunction with the funding provided pursuant to this section.

25 6. Any non-profit organization or provider receiving funds from the
26 program shall take all necessary steps to ensure the confidentiality of
27 the individuals receiving services pursuant to state and federal laws.

28 § 4. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section
29 or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of competent juris-
30 diction to be invalid and after exhaustion of all further judicial
31 review, the judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remain-
32 der thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause,
33 sentence, paragraph, section or part of this act directly involved in
34 the controversy in which the judgment shall have been rendered.

35 § 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
36 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
37 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
38 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
39 completed on or before such effective date.