

Women's Health Protection Act

NFPRHA Supports S.217/H.R.448

Sponsored by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Representative Judy Chu (D-CA), the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA) is designed to roll back the onslaught of state-level attacks on the right to have an abortion and on the clinicians who provide abortion services. WHPA would prohibit state activity that impedes women's access to abortion services.

What Does the Bill Do?

WHPA prohibits any level of government (federal, state, or local) from imposing limitations or requirements on abortion services "that are more burdensome than those restrictions imposed on medically comparable procedures, do not significantly advance women's health or the safety of abortion services, and make abortion services more difficult to access."¹ This includes:

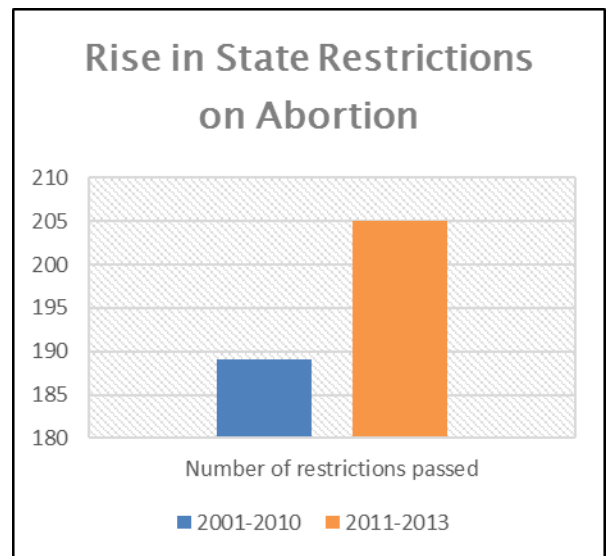
- Imposing medically unnecessary facility standards;
- Requiring abortion providers to have hospital admitting privileges;
- Restricting medical abortion services, including the use of telemedicine and requirements to use outdated protocols not based on scientific evidence;
- Requiring women to make additional visits to health centers prior to receiving abortion care (e.g., undergoing ultrasounds or mandatory counseling); or,
- Prohibiting abortion prior to fetal viability.

Why Do We Need WHPA?

Restrictive laws are frequently proposed under the guise of protecting women's health and increasing the safety of abortion services. However, the safety of

abortion is well-documented and the ultimate goal of these restrictions is to eliminate abortion in the United States entirely.

- Over the past few years, state legislatures across the United States have introduced and passed a record number of restrictions on access to safe, legal abortion services.
- From 2011 to 2013, 30 states enacted 205 laws restricting abortion services and providers, and 56% of women now live in states with policies hostile to abortion.²



Source: Guttmacher Institute

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- WHPA protects health care professionals committed to providing abortion services. Many of the more recent state-level restrictions on abortion services have targeted providers, leading to the closing of multiple sites across the country. Abortion providers deserve to be free of the targeted, discriminatory policies that have become all too common.
- WHPA sets a baseline for women across the country that respects their decision-making and re-establishes the right for all women to make medical decisions in private consultation with her health care provider.
- WHPA levels the playing field, ensuring that all women--regardless of geography, income, education, race, and ethnicity--have the same ability to access abortion services when needed.
- In the face of unprecedented assault on women's health and rights in the states, it is time to go on the offensive and take a proactive stand.

Endnotes

¹ Women's Health Protection Act of 2015, S.217/H.R.448, 114th Congress. (2015).

² Heather D. Boonstra and Elizabeth Nash, "A Surge of State Abortion Restrictions Puts Providers—and the Women They Serve—in the Crosshairs," *Guttmacher Policy Review* 17, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 9–15.