



#ActforWomen

***Take Action
to Support the
Women's Health
Protection Act***

ACT!
FOR WOMEN ■

Safe. Legal.
Where we live



**Safe. Legal.
Where we live.**

Since 2010, extremist politicians have passed nearly 300 new restrictions on access to abortion services and other critical reproductive health care. A woman's constitutional rights should not depend on her zip code.

In too many parts of the country, it has become extremely difficult for women to safely and legally end a pregnancy – because of legislative attacks, a woman's ability to make her own personal decisions about her reproductive health care differs widely from state to state. The promise of our Constitution is one of equal rights and protections for all. But politicians are trying to sneak around the Constitution and decades of precedent, breaking that promise for millions of women. We need a federal law that puts a woman's health, safety, and rights before politics. The Women's Health Protection Act does exactly that.

Now is the time to Act for Women. When a right is protected by the U.S. Constitution and decades of Supreme Court precedent, all states must respect that right. That's why courts across the country have stepped in to strike down underhanded laws as unconstitutional—and crucial legal battles over abortion access in Texas and Mississippi are pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. But this growing reproductive health care crisis demands action not only from our nation's highest court, but also from our elected officials. Our leaders face a relentless anti-choice majority in the 114th Congress, and it is essential that you remind them that reproductive rights are a priority for you. This toolkit provides ideas for how you can support the Women's Health Protection Act in your community.

The Women's Health Protection Act (S. 217/H.R. 448) is a federal bill that would defend the constitutional rights of every woman to decide for herself whether to continue or end a pregnancy – no matter where she lives. By keeping politicians out of our personal health care decisions, the bill would ensure that abortion services continue to be available and that abortion providers are not singled out for medically unwarranted restrictions that harm women by choking off access to safe, legal, high-quality abortion care. The Women's Health Protection Act would prohibit state and federal politicians from imposing a range of dangerous anti-choice provisions, such as those that:

- single out the provision of abortion services for restrictions that are more burdensome than those 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.

To learn more about how the Act would help protect your reproductive rights, visit actforwomen.org.



**Safe. Legal.
Where we live.**

Why do we need the Women’s Health Protection Act?

Extremist lawmakers are playing politics with women’s health. In states across the country, politicians are imposing a range of dangerous, anti-choice provisions that interfere with a woman’s ability to make personal decisions about her reproductive health, family, and future. These measures have nothing to do with women’s health and safety – in fact, they harm women’s health by making it more difficult to access reproductive health care. At a time when the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to consider one or more of these unconstitutional legislative attacks, our elected officials must do their part to protect our constitutional rights from laws aimed at blocking women’s access to safe and legal abortion.

Who is supporting the Women’s Health Protection Act?

Ever since **Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)** and **Representative Judy Chu (D-CA)** re-introduced the Act in the 114th Session of Congress, they have been joined by an ever-growing list of co-sponsors (see the full list at actforwomen.org). Municipal officials have issued public statements and passed resolutions, calling on their state and federal lawmakers to protect women’s constitutional rights. State lawmakers are endorsing the bill too because they know firsthand that we need a federal response now. And with each day, new advocacy organizations, medical professionals, and people of faith are joining the campaign.

Now, it’s your turn to Act for Women.

Ready to take action?

Here are some ways to Act for Women in your state:

1. Write a letter to the editor about the Women's Health Protection Act.

Want to spread the word about the Women's Health Protection Act in your community? Consider writing a letter to the editor (LTE) of your local newspaper about how the Women's Health Protection Act will guard access to reproductive health care for women in your state or neighboring states. LTEs are a great way to educate the public while advocating for your position. And Members of Congress use them to measure their constituents' opinions on key matters.

While there is sample language at the end of this toolkit, be sure to personalize your LTE to tell readers why the Women's Health Protection Act is important to *you*. It's best if your LTE can be in response to something that is happening in your state or to a recent article in your newspaper about reproductive health.

Remember: keep it brief and keep it local. The shorter the letter, the more likely it is to be published. Typically, 250-300 words is a good length. You can check your newspaper's website for any letter guidelines they may have, and for how to submit your LTE. Connect your letter to your local community as much as you can.

If it doesn't get published at first, try again. It may be that the newspaper received a particularly large number of letters one week, or that they would prefer for a letter to be printed in response to current events. Re-submit your letter again with a new angle.

2. Attend a Town Hall meeting and ask about the Women's Health Protection Act

Town Hall meetings are opportunities for you and your neighbors to hear firsthand from your Member of Congress while she or he is back home in your community. These forums often feature the Member of Congress discussing current timely issues, and they often allow for questions from the audience.

Visit the website of your Member of Congress ([Congress.gov/members](https://www.congress.gov/members)) to see if a Town Hall meeting is scheduled, and feel free to call their local office to ask for details. Prepare for the Town Hall by finding out whether your Member of Congress is a cosponsor of the Women's Health Protection Act at [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) and then tailor your question accordingly. Feel free to contact us for technical assistance at info@actforwomen.org.

If they are a cosponsor: Briefly introduce yourself, stating your name and town. Say that you are concerned about the eroding access to abortion and other reproductive health care due to the coordinated attacks on abortion access happening in states across the country, and that we need a federal response like the Women's Health Protection Act. Thank them for being a cosponsor and ask how you can help them support the bill. Note that even if your Member of Congress is already a cosponsor, it is still very important that they hear this note of thanks and are reminded of how important this issue is to their constituents.

If they are not a cosponsor: Find out what you can about their positions on reproductive rights issues. If they support reproductive rights, you can use a Town Hall as a chance to make sure they understand the importance of the Women's Health Protection Act and ask them to consider cosponsoring it. If they are not supportive of reproductive rights, it is still important that your voice and perspective is heard. If they are very hostile to reproductive rights, contact us for additional technical assistance at info@actforwomen.org.

3. Connect the Women's Health Protection Act to your State Work

If you're already involved with a state or local pro-choice organization, as a staff member, volunteer, activist, board member, or coalition partner, consider teaming up for an action about the Women's Health Protection Act! Host a panel discussion featuring local experts on reproductive rights, hold a letter writing party to your Members of Congress, or consider a visibility event, such as tabling at a community fair. We can help provide petition templates and speaker suggestions. Want to go even further? Contact us at info@actforwomen.org for assistance in inviting your Member of Congress to speak at an event, if appropriate.

4. Schedule an in-district lobby visit to discuss the Women's Health Protection Act.

In-district lobby visits are when a constituent goes to a Member of Congress' district office to meet with staff or the Member to talk about a specific bill or issue. Members of Congress often have several offices in their districts/states, so chances are good that there is one near you. Find your Congress member's office information on their website; some Members have a meeting request form on their website which you can use to request a meeting, while others may require you to call. Be sure to call the number of the office nearest you. Explain that you are constituent seeking a meeting to discuss reproductive rights and the Women's Health Protection Act. Lobby visits are more fun when you have likeminded colleagues, friends, or neighbors with you, so team up with three or four other people to schedule one group visit.

Before your meeting, read up on your Member of Congress. Check their website and read their biography, recent press releases, committee assignments, and which issues are most important to them. Learn what you can about their positions on reproductive health, rights, and justice issues. You will need to know whether your Member already supports the Women's Health Protection Act, so you can be clear about what your ask is.

Before the meeting:

- Complete background research on the issue and the legislator
- Be clear about your goals of the meeting, whether that goal is thanking them for their support and offering to help move the bill, or asking them to support the Act
- Bring a friend or two and divide up your roles – one of you can lead the meeting, one can tell a story, and one can make the “ask”
- Contact us at info@actforwomen.org if you need help preparing or if you need further information

During the meeting:

- Introduce yourselves
- Thank the legislator or staff member for the meeting
- Thank them for any recent votes or positions you agree with
- Explain why you are here. Why do you support the Women’s Health Protection Act? Why is this issue important to you?
- It’s okay not to know everything about the bill or the issue – you don’t need to be an expert lobbyist. You are a constituent who cares about this issue, and that is enough. Your voice is important.
- If possible, share a story to help personalize the situation and illustrate why this issue matters. It’s okay to be emotional and personal, but it’s still important to stay professional.
- Be clear about what you are asking. Do you want them to cosponsor this bill? If they already are a cosponsor, you can ask them to recruit more colleagues to cosponsor, to talk about the Act to the media or their constituents, and find out what they think you can do to help move the Women’s Health Protection Act.
- Thank them again!

5. Amplify the voices of your state and local lawmakers

Since 2010, extremist politicians have passed nearly 300 restrictions that interfere with the very personal decisions that should belong to women and families. That’s why state legislators across the country are endorsing the Women’s Health Protection Act. **Call on your state lawmakers to take a stand for your rights and endorse the Women’s Health Protection Act at actforwomen.org.** Want to make a more concerted effort to gather legislative endorsements? Check out the Advocacy Tools section of this guide for a sample email you can send to your state legislators.

Local elected officials can also take a stand. Municipal officials in New York, NY; Austin and Houston, TX; San Francisco, CA; and Dane County, WI have voiced their support for the Women’s Health Protection Act by issuing public statements and passing resolutions. Contact your local officials and ask them to pass a resolution in support of the Women’s Health



**Safe. Legal.
Where we live.**

Protection Act. Such resolutions can be easily connected to pressing local issues and a broad call for reproductive health access. Contact us for strategic resources at info@actforwomen.org.

6. #ActforWomen Online

Put your social media addiction to good use: commit to posting about the Women's Health Protection Act using the hashtag [#ActforWomen](#). As the campaign progresses, you can share opportunities for your supporters to take action in support of the bill. There are sample tweets at the end of this toolkit.

Can't make an in-person meeting with your Member of Congress? Email, call, or engage them on social media to ask for their support of the Women's Health Protection Act or thank them for cosponsoring the bill – visit their Facebook pages and leave a comment or Tweet at them to publicly share your support for the bill. And you can always take action at actforwomen.org.

THANK YOU.

Thank you for joining the effort to protect women's safe and legal access to reproductive health care. Please contact us with questions or ideas and for support on any of these projects at info@actforwomen.org.



Safe. Legal.
Where we live.

Advocacy Tools

Sample Letter to the Editor

A woman's ability to exercise her constitutional right to end a pregnancy safely and legally should not be determined by virtue of her zip code. The promise of our Constitution is one of equal rights and protections for all. We cannot allow politicians to break that promise to millions of women by enacting laws that make an end-run around the Constitution and disregard women's ability to make her own personal health care decisions. Since 2010, lawmakers have passed nearly 300 restrictions on access to abortion services and other critical reproductive health care. These measures have nothing to do with women's health and safety – in fact, they harm women's health by making it more difficult to access reproductive health care.

We need a federal law that puts women's health, safety, and rights before politics. The Women's Health Protection Act (H.R. 448/S. 217) would uphold the constitutional right of every woman in the U.S. to safely and legally end a pregnancy with dignity, regardless of where she happens to live. By keeping politicians out of our personal health care decisions, the bill would ensure that abortion services remain available and that abortion providers are not singled out for medically unwarranted restrictions that harm women by preventing them from accessing safe, legal, high-quality care.

[Include a personal reflection on the situation in your state and/or why the act is important to you.]

It is essential that Congress pass the Women's Health Protection Act to ensure that each woman can make decisions based on her personal values, the advice of the medical professionals she trusts, and what's right for her family.

Sample Social Media Messages

Draw attention to why we need the Women's Health Protection Act:

- Politicians shouldn't play doctor. #ActForWomen keeps private medical decisions between women and their doctors: actforwomen.org.
- A woman's constitutional rights should not depend on her zip code. Tell your lawmakers to #ActForWomen: actforwomen.org.
- It's time we have a law that puts women's health & rights before politics. Tell your lawmakers to #ActForWomen: actforwomen.org



**Safe. Legal.
Where we live.**

Highlight a bad state law that would be remedied by the federal bill and pair it with a call to action. For example:

- Restrictions in [#Texas](#) harm women by closing clinics & limiting access to care. Tell your lawmakers to [#ActForWomen](#): actforwomen.org

Take action and ask your Congressperson to become a sponsor:

- [.@NancyPelosi](#), attacks on women's [#reprorights](#) have gone too far. Will you take a stand and [#ActForWomen](#)? actforwomen.org.
- [.@SenatorReid](#), we need a federal law that protects women's health & rights. Will you take a stand and [#ActForWomen](#)? actforwomen.org.

Or, if your Member of Congress is already a sponsor, thank them:

- Thank you [@RepJudyChu](#) for championing [#reprorights](#) & joining 150+ Members of Congress on the [#ActForWomen](#)!
- Thank you [@SenBlumenthal](#) for standing up for women's health and supporting the [#ActForWomen](#)!

Tell your story: why are reproductive rights important to you? Why do we need a federal law? Sign your post with "That's why I [#ActForWomen](#)."

Sample Letter to State Lawmakers

Dear [Decision Maker],

For too long, reproductive rights in this country have been chipped away by extremist lawmakers who think nothing of putting political ideology above women's health, rights, and safety. Here in our state, we have been affected by [personalize here].

It's time to stop these attacks. We need a federal law that puts women's health first. That's why legislators like Texas State Representative Jessica Farrar, North Dakota State Representative Gail Mooney, and Wisconsin State Representative Chris Taylor are all endorsing the Women's Health Protection Act. Now they're calling on lawmakers all across the country like you to join them. You can take action at actforwomen.org.

Under the Women's Health Protection Act, states could no longer impose oppressive and medically unnecessary requirements on reproductive health care providers, such as those that restrict medication abortion, deny women and doctors the opportunity to use telemedicine, or force women to undergo invasive mandatory and unnecessary ultrasounds.



**Safe. Legal.
Where we live.**

The Women's Health Protection Act would keep extremist lawmakers from interfering with women's private decision making and begin to restore the constitutional rights established for women by Roe v. Wade.

We need a federal law that puts women's health and rights first. I urge you to stand up for my rights and join your colleagues in state houses across the country by urging Congress to pass and President Obama to sign the Women's Health Protection Act: actforwomen.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

[Your Name]