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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF A

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

Interfaith Impact of NYS supports the introduction of a Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act that would protect a woman's right to choose or refuse abortion and to choose or refuse contraception in New York State. This Act would add safeguard exceptions for the health of the woman to restrictions on abortion and move the law from the criminal code to the public health law.

Our religious traditions affirm that life is sacred, but different religious traditions have different beliefs about when personhood begins. Science, medicine, law and philosophy contribute to this understanding. Our shared scriptural traditions neither condemn nor prohibit abortion, but they do call on us to act compassionately and justly when facing difficult moral decisions

No single religious voice can speak for all faith traditions on abortion, nor should the government take sides on religious differences. Women must have the right to apply or reject the principles of their own faith in this regard.

We affirm women as moral agents who have the capacity, right and responsibility to make the decision, with their doctors, as to whether or not abortion is justified in their specific circumstance.

Now, in the face of continuing attacks on reproductive rights, New York's abortion laws need to be strengthened to reflect current medical practice. We must ensure that any attempts to regulate abortion services at the state level do not compromise women's health and safety.

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State is a statewide organization of congregations and individuals from Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Reform Jewish and other progressive and liberal faiths working for the common good through progressive religious advocacy.

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