

Support HB 88 – Protect the Right to Abortion in the Granite State

Bill Summary: HB 88, the Access to Abortion-care Act (AAA), would put abortion rights into statute in New Hampshire. This legislation would not change any current restrictions on abortion in the Granite State. It would however, ensure that through statute, abortion up to 24 weeks will remain legal by adding language the state cannot further restrict access to abortion.

After the fall of *Roe*, it's up to the states to protect the right to abortion. Since the *Dobbs* decision to overturn the *Roe* and *Casey* rulings, state politicians are now responsible for protecting our right to reproductive healthcare. Since the ruling in *Dobbs*, 25 million people have lost access to abortion in their home state,ⁱ including 1 in 3 American women of reproductive age.ⁱⁱ It is critical that New Hampshire provides state protections to ensure that abortion remains safe, legal, and accessible. Right now, politicians have the ability to freely chip away access to reproductive care with New Hampshire being the *only* state in New England with no protections for abortion. It is long overdue that New Hampshire pass protections amidst a national landscape of uncertainty and fear; HB 88 offers an excellent opportunity to enshrine the right to abortion. Legislators should vote in line with the Granite State's long standing values of the right to privacy and freedom from government interference.

Abortion is essential health care and a human right. Politicians should not interfere with an individual's ability to make their own private health decisions. Politicians do not have the expertise to make these decisions; only health professionals and patients do. Abortion is an extremely safe component of comprehensive reproductive health care. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, abortion is "an essential component of women's health care."ⁱⁱⁱ Everyone should have access to safe and legal care regardless of where they live, who they are, or how much money they make.

Preventing further attacks on access to abortion is in the best interest of public health and racial and economic equality. Research finds that restricting access to abortion is associated with higher maternal mortality rates.^{iv} According to the Guttmacher Institute, about half of Americans seeking abortion care live on incomes under the federal poverty level, while two-thirds of patients are poor or low income.^v Patients refused abortions are nearly four times as likely to live below the federal poverty line four years later compared to those who had abortions.^{vi} Various physician advocacy organizations, such as the American Medical Association, attest restricting abortion is an act of government intrusion into medicine, the patient-physician relationship, and a patient's right to evidence-based reproductive health services.^{vii} Legislators should effect policy that centers equity and adheres to what public health experts recommend.

The vast majority of Granite Staters support safe, legal abortion. It's time we protect it. Seventy-two percent of polled Granite Staters identified as pro-choice in 2022,^{viii} while data from 2021 shows sixty-six percent support keeping abortion legal in all/most cases, demonstrating a clear rejection of the idea that bodies are public property to be regulated by government officials. In fact, only three states have a higher percentage of residents who support safe, legal abortion access.^{ix} As this polling makes clear, Granite Staters don't appreciate government intervention into their private health care decisions.

The time to protect reproductive rights has never been more critical. House Bill 88 makes explicit that Granite State patients and families will continue to have the freedom to access abortion in a majority of situations. With no federal constitutional protections in place, New Hampshire must make it clear to its residents and the nation that it is a state that values privacy, freedom, and individual decision-making by passing the Access to Abortion-care Act.

Support HB 88 – It’s Long Overdue New Hampshire Protects the Right to Abortion

ⁱ Planned Parenthood Action Fund, *REPORT: 25 Million Women At Risk Of Losing Abortion Access Due to Kavanaugh*, n.d., available at <https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/abortion/state-of-emergency/25-million-women-risk-losing-abortion-access-if-brett-kavanaugh-confirmed>

ⁱⁱ Katie Shepherd, Rachel Roubein, Caroline Kitchener, *1 in 3 American women have already lost abortion access. More restrictive laws are coming*, August 2022, The Washington Post, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/08/22/more-trigger-bans-loom-1-3-women-lose-most-abortion-access-post-roe/>

ⁱⁱⁱ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Abortion Access Fact Sheet*, 2023, available at, https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/abortion-is-health_care

^{iv} Jacqueline Howard, *Maternal and infant death rates are higher in states that ban or restrict abortion*, report says, CNN, December 2022, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/14/health/maternal-infant-death-abortion-access/index.html>

^v Guttmacher Institute, *U.S. Abortion Demographics*, n.d., available at <https://www.guttmacher.org/united-states/abortion/demographics>

^{vi} University of California San Francisco, *Study Shows Women Who Are Denied Abortions Are More Likely to Experience Poverty*, *Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health*, available at <https://www.ansirh.org/news/study-shows-women-who-are-denied-abortions-are-more-likely-experience-poverty>

^{vii} Jack Resneck, M.D. President of the American Medical Association, *Press Release: Ruling an egregious allowance of government intrusion into medicine*, The American Medical Association, June 2022, available at <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ruling-egregious-allowance-government-intrusion-medicine>

^{viii} Neil Levesque, *A Survey of Registered New Hampshire Voters*, August 9-11, 2022, New Hampshire Institute of Politics, Saint Anselm College, available at, https://www.anselm.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/NHIOP/Polls/SACSC_NHSW_0822_Book1.pdf

^{ix} *Id.*