



# NYCLU

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

125 Broad Street, 19<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
New York, NY 10004  
212.607.3300  
212.607.3318  
[www.nyclu.org](http://www.nyclu.org)

## **2012 Reproductive Rights and Health Legislative Agenda**

The NYCLU supports the ability of both men and women to make meaningful decisions about their reproductive health care. Meaningful decision-making includes not only the right to choose when and whether to have a child, but building a society in which people have access to the information, resources and services to make that decision informed, attainable and supported. Together, the following legislative initiatives support New Yorkers' ability to make meaningful reproductive health care decisions and would help to build strong and healthy communities.

### **Reproductive Health Act (RHA)**

To reclaim its status as a national, progressive leader and a champion for women, New York must pass the Reproductive Health Act (RHA). New York women are fed up with their health being used as a political pawn and need to know that their right to access basic health care and to control health care decisions for themselves and their families is secure regardless of what happens in Washington. The RHA would guarantee a woman's ability to control her own reproductive health; ensure that a woman will be able to get abortion care if her health is endangered; treat the regulation of abortion care as an issue of public health and medical practice, rather than as a potential crime; and guarantee every New Yorker the right to use or refuse contraception.

### **Comprehensive Sex Education**

Comprehensive sex education is a critical component of a successful health education program and of a student's overall educational achievement and success in life. New York's young people need and deserve access to comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education that is respectful and inclusive of all students. The NYCLU supports the adoption of a set of universal standards for sexuality and sexual health instruction taught in New York schools, to ensure every young person educated in our public school system obtains the skills and

knowledge they need for a healthy future. Comprehensive sex education is proven to improve young people's health and delay sexual activity, and New Yorkers overwhelmingly support it.

### Health Benefit Exchange

The NYCLU supports the creation of a single statewide exchange that reflects principles of health care equity, quality and accessibility for all New Yorkers. New York has always been committed to an affordable and accessible health care system for all New Yorkers, particularly vulnerable populations such as women and children. Establishing New York's exchange is critical to ensuring that over a million currently uninsured New Yorkers are able to benefit from the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act by gaining access to affordable health insurance.

### Paid Family Leave

Meaningful reproductive freedom requires that women and men are fully supported in their decision to have a child. The NYCLU supports a paid family leave policy that helps working families in New York make sound choices about having children and caring for one another by ensuring that employees have financial support and leave from their jobs when their families face serious health care challenges or need to care for a new child.