

# Women's Agenda

## 2018

Right now we have a unique opportunity to make meaningful changes for New York women and girls in this year's state budget. On January 16th, the Governor proposed his FY19 Executive Budget, with gender equality and reproductive health care placed front-and-center. We hope that our lawmakers fight for these measures in their chambers' budget proposals and in budget negotiations – **they are critical to women's lives.**

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Funding for the state's Family Planning Grant remains a priority because it ensures that cost is never a barrier to any New Yorker's ability to access primary and preventive reproductive health care. With constant attempts by the federal administration to limit access to contraception and other basic reproductive health care services, these grant dollars are even more essential now.

### DECRIMINALIZING ABORTION

The Executive Budget proposal fully repeals abortion from New York's penal code, moving the regulation of abortion, like all other medical procedures, to the Public Health and Education Laws. This is a critical step. New York was a leader in 1970 when the state legalized access to abortion before *Roe v. Wade*. But abortion care is still regulated in the criminal code, which is out of step with constitutional protections and current medical realities -- and it can delay and deter care. Abortion is health care that makes a crucial difference in women's lives. Our laws must reflect that.

### COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The Executive Budget proposal requires the State Education Commissioner to establish a "Be Aware Be Informed" program and to create model comprehensive sex education curriculum. While this program would incorporate the broader components of the National Sexuality Education Standards, we need to strengthen it to make sex education a requirement. Our schools must support students as they learn about healthy relationships and sexual health by providing age-appropriate, medically-accurate guidance from kindergarten to 12th grade.



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## CONTRACEPTION INSURANCE COVERAGE

More than 50 percent of pregnancies in New York are unintended. More can and should be done to improve access to contraception. In the shadow of national efforts to overturn the Affordable Care Act and to take away access to affordable coverage for millions, we should be breaking down barriers to birth control by passing the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act. The Executive Budget includes this vital measure.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY REVIEW BOARD

Our rates of maternal mortality are alarming and unacceptable. Black women in New York are nearly four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than white women. The Executive Budget proposes a Maternal Mortality Review Board. This Board is an important step toward identifying the causes of maternal mortality and identifying prevention strategies that can save women's lives and eliminate health care disparities.

## RESTORING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

A technical error in the state's Human Rights Law deprives New York public school students of state anti-discrimination protections. The Executive Budget proposal would fix this language so that state law will prohibit discrimination in all New York schools, as it was meant to, and all students will have access to assistance when they face discrimination in an educational setting.

## PROHIBITING SEX DISCRIMINATION IN OUR STATE CONSTITUTION

While our state constitution forbids discrimination based on race, religion and creed, the Executive Budget proposal would add language explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on sex. This protection will help ensure that New York women are equal in the eyes of the law.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

THE BUDGET DEADLINE IS FAST APPROACHING. THE TIME IS NOW TO TELL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE THE WOMEN'S AGENDA THEIR PRIORITY. TO TAKE ACTION, VISIT [NYCLU.ORG/ACT](http://NYCLU.ORG/ACT).