

Pro-Life Groups Rally Against Cuomo's 'Radical' Abortion Expansion Bill

As part of a 10-point agenda to advance “women’s equality,” New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is calling for an **abortion bill** that opponents believe would allow for “late-term abortions on demand.”

In his recent State of the State address, Cuomo called for an expansion of laws addressing various **women’s issues**. His Women’s Equity Bill links so-called ‘reproductive rights’ with equal pay, human trafficking, sexual harassment in the workplace, domestic violence, housing discrimination and other issues.

During the address Cuomo reinforced his stance on abortion: “Protect a woman’s **freedom of choice**. Enact a Reproductive Health Act, because it is her body, it is her choice.”

Although the governor offered no specifics about the Women’s Equity Bill in his address, it is expected that its provisions on **abortion** would likely be similar to those in the Reproductive Health Act, a bill introduced by Democratic state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, which contains language that would allow for abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy if it is “necessary to protect a woman’s health.”

That distinction differs from the exception of protecting a woman’s life—a point which, opponents of the bill say, is open to broad interpretation.

The New York State Catholic Conference describes the bill as “uncompromising in its terms and extremely sweeping in scope.” Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, called the plan “radical.” In a letter to Cuomo, Dolan cited New York

state's high abortion rate and stated, "I am hard pressed to think of a piece of legislation that is less needed or more harmful than this one."

The **Catholic** Conference stated that the "health" exception has been "broadly interpreted by the courts to include age, economic, social and emotional factors," and deemed it an exception that would "allow more third-trimester abortions in New York State." In a breakdown of the bill, the conference declared it would permit "unlimited late-term abortion on demand."

The conference raised several additional concerns, including language in the bill that would allow a "licensed health care practitioner" to carry out the procedure, stating that the bill would "endanger the lives of women by allowing non-physicians to perform abortions."

While New York State Democratic officials contend that the bill would simply reposition abortion as a public health issue rather than a criminal matter, pro-life groups remain opposed.

Democrats for Life of America have expressed concern that the bill would "supersede any reasonable restrictions on abortion, including parental notification." The group declared that the bill is "out of touch with the views of most Democrats," citing recent Gallup poll statistics on the Democratic constituency's views on abortion.

This week, Stewart-Cousins praised Cuomo for his efforts and called on her colleagues to bring this "crucial legislation to the Senate floor as soon as possible," saying it would "ensure that regardless of what takes place on the national level, a woman's right to choose will always be protected in New York State."