

## **Facts & Talking Points For Governor's Paterson's Reproductive Health Act**

### *Background*

□ On April 18, 2007, the United State Supreme Court, in a 5 – 4 decision, threw out years of precedent and upheld President Bush's Federal Abortion Ban. With this decision the Court deserted its long standing commitment to protecting women's health and opened the floodgates for further state and federal abortion restrictions. Six states have already introduced measures to further restrict abortion since the decision came down; however, New York is proudly working to safeguard a woman's right to access safe and legal abortion by introducing the Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act.

### **What is the Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act?**

□ The Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act, introduced by Governor Eliot Spitzer, is new legislation that takes the principles underlying Roe v. Wade and puts them squarely into New York law. The legislation protects the fundamental right of a woman and her doctor - not politicians - to make private medical decisions.

### **Why Does The Current Law Need To Be Changed?**

□ In 1970, New York introduced one of the first laws in the United States decriminalizing abortion. New York modified its penal code and made it legal for doctors to perform abortions. The law was visionary then, but today it is outdated and confusing. Current law does not contain the foundations upon which Roe was decided, including the fundamental right of women to make private medical decisions, nor does it take into account how abortion care is now provided. Much has changed since the 1970's, and New York needs an up-to-date law that protects a woman's fundamental right to abortion.

□ The Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection will codify New York's longstanding support of reproductive freedom, while ensuring that New York State is prepared if the right to choose is threatened by a weakening of Roe or further federal encroachments.

### **Why Does New York Need To Act?**

□ New York State has a long legacy of leadership in reproductive rights. With a President and a Supreme Court that is systematically chipping away at the fundamental tenets of Roe, it is time for New York to update our laws and pass the nation's strongest legislation that guarantees that a woman has the ability to decide when to have a child. New York must remain a steward for reproductive health, protecting choice and remaining a safe haven for all women.