



Connecticut General Assembly  
SENATE DEMOCRATS

Legislative Office Building, Room 3300  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

**Senate Bill Number 394, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COUNCIL ON PROTECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH.**

The Senate Democratic Caucus proposed this concept as part of our 2019 agenda and we are so pleased that the committee is hearing this important legislation.

This bill would establish a Council on Protecting Women's Health that will advise the Public Health and Insurance committees on strategies to ensure that the actions of the federal government do not impede the provision of health care to women in the state. The council will monitor legislation at the federal level and any litigation relating to women's health and wellness that has the potential to negatively impact women's health in Connecticut and immediately report such strategies, which may include, but not be limited to, the initiation of legislation.

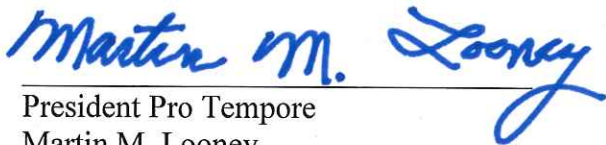
At 9:30 PM on the evening February 7, the United States Supreme Court issued a temporary stay of a Louisiana law only hours before it went into effect. Opponents of the law say it could have left the state with only one doctor in a single clinic authorized to provide abortion services. The case, *June Medical Services v. McGee*, should have been an easy one – a straightforward interpretation of a 2016 Supreme Court precedent with a nearly identical set of facts. Nonetheless, the decision was 5-4, meaning that the rights guaranteed by landmark case of *Roe v. Wade* were one vote from being all but completely gutted on that Thursday night four weeks ago.

The prospect of *Roe* being overturned would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. According to a recent Wall Street Journal Poll, a record 71% of Americans oppose overturning the landmark case. However, conservatives now hold a 5-4 majority on the Supreme Court, and there currently are over a dozen circuit court cases teed up to overturn *Roe*.

But it is not only the actions of the Supreme Court that are leaving women's healthcare in a state of uncertainty. Two weeks ago, the Trump administration announced that it will bar organizations that provide abortion referrals from receiving federal family planning money, a step that could strip millions of dollars from Planned Parenthood and direct it toward religiously-based, anti-abortion groups. Women's health advocates say these new requirements will interfere with health providers' responsibilities to fully counsel patients about reproductive health.

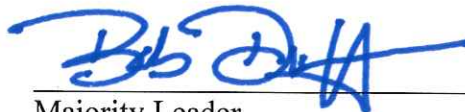
With women's healthcare under fire on the federal level, this council can review a legal threat, and report to the General Assembly as to what, if any, actions we need to take so we can respond quickly and efficiently to preserve quality care for women here in Connecticut. We want to make sure that Connecticut remains a leader in women's healthcare, and we've learned

we can't depend on Washington D.C. to help us. If anything, we need to be prepared to counter the destructive actions of Washington, and this Council will serve as a critical "watchdog" for women's healthcare at a time when it is desperately needed.



---

President Pro Tempore  
Martin M. Looney  
State Senator 11<sup>th</sup> District



---

Majority Leader  
Bob Duff  
State Senator 25<sup>th</sup> District



---

Mary Daugherty Abrams  
State Senator 13<sup>th</sup> District



---

Dennis Bradley  
State Senator 23<sup>rd</sup> District



---

Christine Cohen  
State Senator 12<sup>th</sup> District



---

Mae Flexer  
State Senator 29<sup>th</sup> District



---

Will Haskell  
State Senator 26<sup>th</sup> District



---

Julie Kushner  
State Senator 24<sup>th</sup> District



---

James Maroney  
State Senator 14<sup>th</sup> District



---

Norm Needleman  
State Senator 33<sup>rd</sup> District