



March 29, 2023

The Honorable Judy Chu
U.S. House of Representatives
2423 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Chu:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write in strong support of H.R. 12, the Women's Health Protection Act.

With last year's devastating decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, we believe Congress must immediately pass legislation to protect and advance access to abortion and reproductive health services. APHA has long advocated for access to the full range of reproductive health services, including abortion, as a fundamental right. APHA's recommendations that abortion be readily available, un-delayed, unburdened by psychiatric consultation and supported by appropriately trained providers were cited in the original *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. That history of advocacy for a person's right to make decisions about their own body has continued to the present, with APHA submitting a brief last year in the Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, presenting overwhelming objective evidence that abortion is a necessary tool in promoting health and mitigating health threats and arguing that the ability to safely and legally terminate a pregnancy is both an individual constitutional right and a public health concern.

In 2022, more than 430 bills were introduced in state legislatures to restrict access to abortion, including bills on pre-viability abortion bans, crisis pregnancy center funding, and medication abortion restrictions. At least 43 of these bills were enacted. Eight states enacted trigger bans to automatically ban abortion when the federal right was overturned, bringing the total number of states with trigger laws to 13. Evidence tells us that access to safe abortion is a key factor in preventing deaths and disability among pregnant people due to pregnancy-related causes. These state-level attacks that restrict abortion access lead to worse pregnancy-related health outcomes, further health equity gaps by race, ethnicity, income and location and increase the economic costs associated with exacerbated inequity.

Now, more than ever, the right to abortion needs to be codified in federal law. The Women's Health Protection Act would create a statutory right at the federal level for abortion providers to provide abortion care and for patients to receive it, invalidating state-level attacks and protecting the right to abortion. We enthusiastically support your introduction of this bill and urge the House of Representatives to move swiftly in bringing the bill to the floor for a vote and protecting access to abortion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director