

August 3, 2022

Town Council
c/o Ragini Srivastava
Town of North Hempstead
200 Plandome Ave.
Manhasset, NY 11030

By email: Comments@northhempsteadny.gov

Dear Supervisor DeSena & Councilmembers:

The League of Women Voters of Port Washington-Manhasset and the League of Women Voters of Great Neck unreservedly support the repeal of Section 41A of the Town Code, a restriction enacted in 1971.

We support repeal for many reasons, most important among them: the current code does not align with current NYS law, because it replaces medical standard of care with medically and fiscally unsound political over-reach and, further, because the League supports abortion as part of comprehensive OB-GYN healthcare. The League also opposes medical coercion and government intrusion on a patient's right to determine their individual healthcare needs with their chosen (licensed) healthcare provider.

For years local Leagues, along with the League of New York State, advocated strongly for the NYS Reproductive Health Act (RHA) which, when enacted in 2019, decriminalized abortion. This provision of the Town code criminalizes those who violate its provisions. The RHA removed the risk of criminal sanctions against licensed providers and updated the list of who can provide abortions, so access is increased. Because the RHA protects access and providers, it opposes legislative codes that threaten licensed providers who use their medical judgment to offer "standard of care" services in less-restrictive facilities — codes that effectively reduce patient access for no medically sound reason.

The League explicitly supports the delivery of healthcare in a variety of settings to offer equitable, affordable access. The League regards abortion as one part of comprehensive healthcare that is intertwined in all aspects of OB-GYN care. Almost a third of all pregnancies are naturally occurring spontaneous abortions (miscarriages), some of which do not fully terminate naturally (despite ending the viability of the pregnancy) and medical care is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother. A majority of all induced abortions are triggered by prescription medications, not surgery, so requiring care in hospital settings places undue burdens on both patients and the healthcare system, adding costs without adding safety and reducing patient access to healthcare.

For pregnancies that need surgical intervention, decisions about where to have care and which intervention to use should remain with patients and their providers. Government coercion on bodily autonomy has no place in healthcare. People should not be required to donate organs or be sterilized against their will, nor should their pregnancies be controlled by politics.

We call on the Town of North Hempstead to repeal this section of code immediately.



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