

**Written Testimony for the 2/8/22 2023 Health Budget Hearing** Judith E. Fletcher,  
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**Fair Pay for Home Care (A6329/S5374)** It is imperative that this year's Budget include fair pay for home care workers. The bonus included in Gov. Hochul's Executive Budget, while welcome, is not enough. Permanent salary increases are needed to ensure that home care workers can have sustainable lives for themselves and their families and can afford to stay in or join the workforce. I believe in this on principal, from the point of view of simple fairness to the workers and the benefits to public health and quality of life. But I also have a strong personal interest, as a senior looking toward the future and desperately wanting both my husband and me to be able to age in place. That will be impossible without a robust, respected, and well-compensated workforce of home care workers. My understanding is also that in the long run, this would be of great benefit to the NYS economy, increasing revenue by \$5.4 billion through job creation and moving home care workers off of social assistance.

**Coverage for All (A880A/S1572)** Again, this, to me, is a matter of both basic justice and also the health-related self-interest of each of us. I believe that the State must make up for failures of the federal government to provide healthcare coverage to immigrant and undocumented communities who are uninsured because of their immigration status. A large proportion of these people have been frontline workers in the pandemic, absorbing the terrible risks and stresses of this role. This, in my view, is both a matter of simple justice, that healthcare is a human right for all, but also of public health, for the health and safety of all of us, as, especially in a pandemic, we are only as safe as our least safe neighbors.

**The New York Health Act (A.6058/S.5474):** The NYHA is the most important health-related legislation that we can possibly enact and fund. Since I believe that it won't become a budget issue until after it's passed, I'm not sure if it is appropriate to bring up here, but I can't fail to mention it, as it would save NYS billions of dollars and render moot a number of the other budgeting issues being raised today.

**Reproductive Justice:** While NY has made great strides in this area over the past few years, there is much more that we can do. And in light of the ongoing onslaught of attacks on reproductive rights both federally and in other states, NY must be a reproductive sanctuary. These are some of the bills that are most important to me to be covered by the budget:

**Extend Post-Pregnancy Medicaid Coverage (A307a/S1411):** It is essential for reproductive justice that we expand Medicaid coverage from 60-days to one-year post-pregnancy, to cover the full postnatal period when health issues and complications are most likely to occur.

**New York Abortion Access Fund: (A1926/S758):** This bill is essential for providing equity in access to abortion care, which to me is a basic human right.

**Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC) Study (A5499/S470):** I was shocked when some years ago I learned of the existence of so-called CPCs, and I have been seeking ways to address their manipulative, deceptive practices ever since. It is crucial that, at minimum, a study and report be funded. As we learned in the CA Supreme Court case, addressing this issue is complicated. It is also long overdue.

**Comprehensive Sexuality Education (A6616/S2584):** This seems to me to be a no-brainer. How can a state like NY have no statewide learning standard for comprehensive sexuality education? Such a program would not only give students an age-appropriate, fact-based understanding of their sexual development, it would go a long way to help prevent unintended pregnancies and STIs as well as bullying, sexual harassment and assault, and help in the lifelong development of healthy relationships.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify, Judy Fletcher