



**Written Testimony of New Yorkers Supporting
Medication Abortion on CUNY/SUNY Campuses**

**Submitted for Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Higher Education
Feb 27, 2023**

From Leigh-Anna, age 23, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11221):

“Being a low-income student on scholarships and loans while trying to make ends meet is enough to deal with. I support abortion access on campus because a pregnant student could be so far away from home (I’m from California originally), have little to no income to fund the abortion, and may not have health coverage where they go to school. Medication abortion in student health centers bridges that gap. More access means better outcomes for students and their futures.”

From an anonymous submission, age 28, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11216):

“This country is constantly trying to attack the autonomy cis and trans birth-giving bodies from every possible angle. Not only is abortion medication a discreet way to address the issue, it also provides students with vital resources that do not exist at home or elsewhere if abortion clinics are far away. It’s the right thing to do.”

From Bryan, age 23, at Baruch College, in Woodside, NY (Zip Code: 11377):

“Safety for those who can conceive.”

From Allison, 30, in Manhattan (Zip Code: 10025):

“Body Autonomy is a Human Right.”

From McKenna, age 19, in Manhattan (Zip Code: 10027):

“I support access to medication abortion because I wish my mom would have had access to it when she was a college student. I wish she would have had the option to make a choice for herself on whether or not she wanted to be a mother, but going to school in Oklahoma made that decision for her. No student should be forced into that decision, and providing medication abortion on campuses in New York will ensure that those who come to New York for college from around the world will have autonomy over if or when they decide to have children. Please save the next generation from being forced to carry children to term. New York has the power to grant life-changing and life-saving medication to millions of people, and although my mom wasn't protected by her university, I could be.”

From Sarah Sophie, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11201):

“Medication Abortion is safe, efficient, and reliable. It is less stressful than having to Go to a doctor. All young people should have access to abortion pills.”

From Rebecca, age 52, New Paltz, NY (Zip Code: 12561):

I support access to medication abortion on campus “for bodily autonomy for every student.”
“I have had two abortions. One was family planning, and one was life saving.”

From an anonymous submission, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11220):

“Many college students are away from home and away from their network of known services, such as a primary care doctor, so campus services and campus health take that place. Campus health should not have to refer students out unless it’s an emergency or specialty medical care is required. Medication abortion can safely be prescribed by campus doctors, and there is no reason why politics should get in the way of providing medical care. Birth control is great but is not 100% protective for everyone. After getting pregnant with an IUD and needing an abortion, I was lucky to live in New York where I could get an appointment easily and get medical care relatively close to home. Abortion is part of a comprehensive health service. New Yorkers and everyone deserve medical care.”

From Olivia, at The Graduate Center, CUNY (Zip Code: 10128):

“Having access to medication abortion on campus makes me feel secure in the event of an unwanted pregnancy. A campus clinic environment is much safer and feels more confidential than visiting a Planned Parenthood for an abortion procedure. I have witnessed firsthand the harassment that patients experience at the Planned Parenthood in Manhattan. Religious extremists are allowed to congregate and harass patients going into the clinic, and these extremists are protected by the police. If I were to be an abortion patient at this clinic, I would be mortified by the experience of being harassed by anti-choice extremists and watching the police stand by and protect them, all while trying to access the healthcare I have a legal right to. Making abortion pills available at NY campuses would allow me to access this care in a much safer, less chaotic environment should I ever need to do so.”

From an anonymous student, in Ithaca, NY (Zip Code: 14850):

“I can’t believe we don’t have it already. My campus has a really robust medical center, but no gynecologist, which is something students are pushing for currently.”

From Sebastian, age 26, in Syracuse, NY (Zip Code: 13212):

“Everyone should have abortion access. If a college student only has insurance that will cover their visit at the student health center or does not have access to reliable transportation, they should be able to access abortion care.”

From Hennessy, at CUNY Medgar Evers College, in Manhattan, NY (Zip Code: 10039):

“Abortion pills are essential. Abortion pills are literally safer than Tylenol. Abortion pills on campus would prevent the intimidation students feel at an abortion clinic especially when anti-abortion extremists are outside said clinic trying to intercept students from getting the care they need. Additionally, having medication abortion accessible on campus gives students privacy and agency over what happens to their body.”

“Imagine about 50-100 people praying across the street as you try to go to your appointment. This happens to patients who go to the Soho planned parenthood clinic whether they are pregnant or not. I have been intercepted and made to feel awful at the soho clinic myself during appointments with my gynecologist at said clinic. Patients should be able to get the care they need without harassment, embarrassment, and fear. Additionally, people need to be aware about the brutality clinic defenders face trying to make sure patients access the care they need. Recently, the NYPD brutally and violently arrested 7 people defending the Soho planned parenthood with NYC for Abortion Rights. The NYPD is known to protect clinic invaders like Fidelis Mochinski who are always in violation of the FACE act. The NYPD has contributed to making reproductive access unsafe in NYC.”

From Shayla, age 24, who went to Long Island University (Post) (Zip Code: 11547):

“My experience getting medication in college is not with abortion pills, but with the medication I had been taking for over a year when I got to college, and needed to continue taking, so it is different, but also essential medication. Abortion pills--like all healthcare--should be easily accessible to college students, and having health services on campus is the easiest way to ensure that all students have access. One of the biggest challenges I faced with healthcare when I came to college on Long Island from the west coast was trying to figure out how to get my antidepressants since there was nowhere on campus where I could get them. There were also no adults on campus who knew how the university insurance worked, so I was a 20-year-old on my own for the first time with no one to help me figure out how to get my regular prescription that I needed, on top of having to figure out all the regular college stuff. I was lucky enough to have a car on Long Island, so when I finally figured out how to get my medication, I could go to the pharmacy and pick it up, but most students who lived on campus who were not from the area did not have cars. On Long Island, like other parts of NYS outside of NYC, you need a car to get around, but a lot of people who are not from the area wouldn't know that because everyone only thinks of NYC when they think of NY. So, the only way to actually be sure that all students have access to essential medications and other health services is to have them physically on campus. On top of the physical access issues, I had no idea how to get to the right doctor I needed to see for my insurance to prescribe my medication. College is overwhelming enough as it is without having to try to navigate the nightmare that is private insurance. The services offered on campus were always offered free of charge regardless of insurance to students because they were on campus, because it would be too much of an administrative nightmare trying to deal with every possible insurance a student could have, and all insurance plans would have to be covered since it is service offered on campus, so it would create an issue if not all students had access to it. If

students could get medication on college campuses as well, it would remove the problem of private insurance bullshit. So, even though the medication I needed in college was not abortion pills, my challenges still demonstrate two of the biggest barriers to medical treatment that college students face: Physical access to all the necessary places to go for medication, and the nightmare of private insurance. Having access to abortion pills on campus would solve both of those problems.”

From Aarna, age 19, studying at NYU (Zip Code: 10010):

“I support medication abortion on campus because it is imperative that we equipping young people with the knowledge and are spruces to make choices that feel good to them. In a Post-Roe world, reproductive justice and abortion access is facing various barriers. As such, it is the duty of our institutions, our universities to take a stand.”

From Lizzie, age 26, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11201):

“Providing access to medication abortion on campuses helps to break down the unnecessary (and political) barriers between abortion care and the rest of reproductive and preventative health care and serves to reduce the burden on clinics by providing students with an alternative way of accessing abortion quickly and safely. I had an abortion when I was a public health graduate student at Columbia University. I was lucky that at that time, Planned Parenthood in Brooklyn was not as over-burdened compared to the way it is now, so I was able to get an appointment quickly. I have chronic illnesses and I am disabled and I was experiencing severe morning sickness very early on in my pregnancy. I did not want to be pregnant anyway, but feeling so sick made the abortion even more urgent. If I had to wait weeks to get an appointment in New York, which is now routine in this Post-Dobbs world, I would definitely have chosen to have a medication abortion on campus if I had had that option.”

From an anonymous submission, age 27, at CUNY Graduate Center, SUNY Binghamton, in Seaford, NY (Zip Code: 11783):

“I believe that all individuals are entitled to education. When someone becomes pregnant it can disrupt their education, career plans and goals. It is imperative that universities and schools do their part to ensure that students are protected from such derailments. Having abortion access on campus ensures that students have safe, reliable, and quick access to the healthcare they need to continue their lives and education uninterrupted. Of course, it also ensures the safety of students from anti-abortion protesters who make it their mission to harass anyone they think might be going to a healthcare clinic for an abortion. Schools need to care about the wellbeing of their students, and this is one small way they can prove that they do.”

From an anonymous submission, age 24, at a CUNY in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11207) [CW: SEXUAL ASSAULT]:

“It is often more comfortable and accessible of an option. You can go through it at home, with a loved one, in your bed, with your heating pad and some tea, the way you would a heavy period.

Medication abortion also can allow for more anonymity, which is something that I've been thinking about as the federal government moves further towards punishing those who seek and provide abortion. Abortion is also often prohibitively expensive. All of this means that women will try to abort in other, unsafe ways. Girls are sharing tips and tricks like taking hot hot baths and drinking xyz herbs to abort. That is not something that should be happening in this city.

One night a girl in my class brought a few girls into her dorm room and told us she needed our help. She told us about how over the holiday break, she was raped. Her uncle, a man well-respected in her family, brutally assaulted and impregnated her.

We didn't know what to do. The health services at our school were limited, and our education around abortion services even less so. We weren't even close to her- she was just incredibly brave and reached out to the women nearby her, hoping that someone would show up for her. I was the one who took her to the clinic. Somehow we scrounged up the \$400+, still debating whether to save money by taking the subway home instead of a cab.

She had to go into the room alone. I wasn't allowed in with her. She had to be put under and allow them to do the procedure alone, barely aware of what was happening or what they were specifically doing at any particular point. I'm sure you can imagine the fear and vulnerability she must have felt, having just been traumatized. She spent the rest of the day in her dorm room, alone. That was the care she got. She did not graduate."

From an anonymous submission, age 42, who attended Hunter and Queens Colleges, currently in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11216):

"Everyone needs access to contraceptives, wherever they work, live, or study."

From Emilee, in Suffolk County, NY (Zip Code: 11788):

"It is imperative to consider the need for access to medication abortion and having the option to receive this medication on campus would increase access and promote the overall health and well being of women in a hugely impactful way!"

From Sagie, age 25, in New York, NY (Zip Code: 10031):

"I am writing in favor of Assembly Bill A3322A, which would require SUNY to offer abortion by medication techniques at all on-campus student health centers at colleges or universities within the SUNY system. Medication abortion expands reproductive rights and lessens the burden on pregnant people to undergo invasive operations creating greater demands on their time, wallets, and psyche."

From Sun, age 20, at Borough of Manhattan Community College, living in Queens, NY (Zip Code: 11436):

"What if I have safe sex yet still become pregnant? What if I'm assaulted? Plus so many more and having immigrant parents means they will not be open to talk or help me through that."

From an anonymous submission in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11207):

“I think all campuses should have access medication abortion because the health centers offer so many other services, why should this be treated differently? Not all students are able to travel off campus to a clinic, whether it be a 15 min commute or 5 hours, it’s not always doable. If campus health centers had medication abortion accessible to students, it would eliminate barriers such as transportation, financial, and time.

I’ve been fortunate enough to have had access to abortion when I needed it through clinics, I’m fortunate to live in a place where abortion is still accessible and legal, and I was able to make that choice for myself when I had to.”

From an anonymous submission in Queens, NY (Zip Code: 11421):

“Pregnancy should always be a choice. A pregnancy is no small matter, and pregnancy can actively impede someone from continuing their studies. As a result, medication abortion is a safe and effective method of terminating a pregnancy well before viability, allowing for a student to experience the least amount of anxiety, fears, and interruption to their work.

I am a native New Yorker three generations deep. I live here because of the freedoms I am allowed compared to areas elsewhere in the same country that would be deny my right to personal autonomy as someone who can get pregnant. I would hope that we continue to be a beacon and example of the right to choose.”

From Alicia, age 29, in Manhattan, NY (Zip Code: 10009):

“Because there is a scary amount of assault and rape that occurs on college campuses. And if I were to get pregnant from a rape I would want an ABORTION.

I was lucky to have access to Planned Parenthood when I had an unwanted pregnancy at age 23. I was not ready to be a parent and would have struggled to financially support a baby and myself. That abortion saved my life.”

From Maya, age 22, in Brooklyn, NY (Zip Code: 11207):

“I support medication abortion on campus because it just makes sense. Medication abortion on campus opens up so many increased opportunities for access, and sends the message that New York is a safe haven for abortion seekers. As a student at Barnard College, I routinely struggled to seek out healthcare on (and off) campus, particularly as a first-generation, low-income student who had limiting insurance. Medication abortion on campus and increased access to reproductive healthcare would have made me feel more supported at school.”

From Erin, age 26, at SUNY New Paltz, in Ulster County, NY (Zip Code: 12401):

“I support medication abortion on campus because abortion is freedom. I’m Fall of 2020, I had an abortion and it was extremely isolating and difficult due to widespread stigma, misinformation and not to mention Covid. The overwhelming feeling of relief after my abortion is the most common emotion post abortion and that’s been studied. I now work in abortion access for a telemedicine abortion provider and aim to give folks all of the resources and information with compassion and without judgment, since that’s what I would’ve wanted for

myself. It is vital that universities have medication abortion provision so that students can access this health care, yes just like any other health care!!!! This would limit more barriers folks already face when accessing this health care. I went to an OB/GYN on Long Island when I decided to have an abortion and faced stigma, mismanagement and medical negligence as well as basically looked up and learned about the process on the internet myself since I didn't know anyone who had ever had an abortion prior to my own experience."

From Rachel, age 25, in Manhattan, NY (Zip Code: 10031):

"I support this because campus health services are often the most accessible ways for students to get healthcare. I have relied on my campus health center for most medical services since I started graduate school. I would hope that my school, and all others in New York, would provide all healthcare options for students."

Number of Testimonies: 27

