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**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
S.0438 / STEWART-COUSINS

TO: Senate Health Committee
DATE: May 6, 2014

Subject: An act amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the Reproductive Health Act.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports the above referenced legislation, which would guarantee a woman's right to make personal, private decisions about her reproductive health care. This legislation will protect the right to choose or refuse abortion and to choose or refuse contraception. In the face of increasing attacks on reproductive rights, New York's laws need to be strengthened to protect women's health and safety.

This legislation would repeal the penal code provisions contained in New York's abortion statute, and would place laws related to the regulation of abortion in the public health code. The State would continue to regulate abortion in the same way it regulates other medical services. Consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, the Act would allow abortion in the absence of fetal viability and after that, only if there is a threat to the woman's health or life.

The League of Women Voters of New York State has long supported a woman's constitutional right to privacy in making reproductive choices. This legislation would add those protections in *Roe v. Wade* to New York State Public Health Law. It would protect New York women in the event that *Roe v. Wade* is no longer the law of the land.

This legislation will not force any hospital or individual to provide abortion, it will not allow unqualified persons to provide abortion and it will not prevent the state from regulating abortion to ensure its safety.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support for S. 0438, which is designed to protect the fundamental right of individuals to make personal, private reproductive health care decisions.