



Human Rights Resolution Supports Reproductive Rights, including access to abortion

U.S. Representative Nikema Williams introduces resolution commending state and local leaders for upholding abortion as a human right

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(WASHINGTON, D.C.) September 24, 2024—Today **U.S. Representative Nikema Williams (GA-5)**, alongside co-leads **Representatives Jamie Raskin (MD-8), Troy Carter (LA-2), Alma Adams (NC-12), Greg Casar (TX-35) and Jennifer McClellan (VA-4)** and 88 original co-sponsors, introduced a [resolution](#) recognizing that abortion is health care and a human right. It also recognized and commended state and local governments' leadership for introducing and passing similar resolutions in their cities and counties.

The resolution comes at a critical time. Since the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, in at least 26 states—about half of the United States population—abortion is either banned completely, heavily restricted to the earliest days of pregnancy, or under legal threat. Fifteen states have criminal penalties for patients and providers ranging from less than a year to potential life in prison. These restrictions on abortion are wildly inconsistent with the US's obligations under international human rights law.

Treaties ratified by the US are considered the “supreme Law of the Land” under clause 2 of Article VI of the US Constitution and should be upheld at the Federal, State, and local level. In a post-Dobbs US where the federal right to abortion no longer exists, these human rights treaties carry more significance than ever.

“Let's be perfectly clear—we are in a public health crisis. These continuous rollbacks on reproductive freedoms violate international human rights law. There is no question about it, abortion is health care and a human right.

Instead of undermining human rights with restrictions that criminalize young people, mothers, and often those most struggling to access care and make ends meet—sometimes costing them their health, wellbeing and even their lives—the US should be doing all it can to right the course, to increase access to this life-saving care and uphold its commitment to human rights treaties.

*These local resolutions, proclamations and ordinances are the first step in implementing the recommendations from the United Nations Human Rights Committee to take swift actions to protect access to critical reproductive healthcare including abortion. We urge other state and local governments to join in the fight to protect our reproductive freedom. They too can play an important role in ensuring the US upholds its human rights obligations,” says **Bethany Van Kampen Saravia, Senior Legal and Policy Advisor, Ipas US.***

Ipas, one of the leading international organizations working to increase access to abortion globally, has been spearheading this effort in partnership with dozens of state and local organizations to encourage local governments to play a critical role in ensuring the US upholds its human rights obligations at every level.

This resolution in Congress not only upholds abortion as a human right, it also commends state and local governments for aligning with international human rights standards, specifically the recommendations made by the United Nations Human Rights Committee following the United States 5th review under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2023.

Local law-making such as this is key to affirming abortion as a human right. Together, Ipas and these elected officials are working city by city, county by county, and state by state, to urge governments across the U.S. to enact legislation to protect and promote reproductive freedom.

“Ipas US has worked in several states to document the human rights violations related to sexual and reproductive health care access. These violations are extreme but unfortunately not surprising. With the overturn of Roe v. Wade, the US has joined a handful of autocratic countries bent on denying human rights and restricting access to abortion.

*Today we have seen these human rights violations being addressed, not only at the federal level but at the state and local levels. The resolutions in Texas, North Carolina and Maryland are implementing the recommendations made by the United Nations Human Rights Committee on maternal mortality, voluntary termination of pregnancy, and sexual and reproductive rights and to promote and protect human rights,” says **Dr. Anu Kumar, President and CEO of Ipas.***

The resolution highlights the interconnectedness of local action and global human rights commitments, sending a strong message that state and local governments will continue to defend the rights of everyone in the US despite mounting pressure from the anti-abortion movement.

Ipas works globally to advance reproductive justice by expanding access to abortion and contraception. We believe every person should have the right to bodily autonomy and be able to determine their own future. Across Africa, Asia and the Americas, we work with partners to ensure that reproductive health services, including abortion and contraception, are available and accessible to all.

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