

11.13.07 - New Buffer Zone Bill Signed into Law

Governor Deval L. Patrick

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November 13, 2007

As Delivered

Well welcome everyone. I am very pleased to be joined by President Murray, by Speaker DiMasi, by Secretary Burke, by the members of the House and Senate who are here. To all of you, to sign a bill that strikes an appropriate balance between the freedom of choice and the freedom of expression. We had, for a long time now, a series of laws that have been mostly un-enforceable to enable women to get the reproductive health services to which they are entitled and to which they so desperately need. We have had to find a better balance than the current past law allowed so there was not the level of harassment and intimidation in the exercise of that right but, so there was also a reasonable opportunity for people who have a different view to express that view. We believe that with the legislation, we have struck that better balance. The freedom of choice is secure here in this Commonwealth, and we are all proud of that and we mean for it to be exercised without intimidation and harassment. We also mean to respect the reasonable right to express themselves of people who have a different view. I want to say thank you to the main sponsors of this bill, Senators Fargo and Chandler and Timilty and Tisei, all of whom are here. Representative Walsh could not be here, Representative Sciortino showed great leadership indeed, as all here did. They championed this bill and got it through our legislature with overwhelming support. I also want to recognize and thank the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, NARAL Pro Choice Massachusetts, the Massachusetts chapter of the National Organization for Women, and the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus for pushing so hard to get this done and for their continued advocacy for women's health and the right to choose.