

Statement of Agudath Israel of America on the NY Reproductive Health Act

January 30, 2019



In a move designed to maintain and even exceed the sanctioning of abortion in the event the U.S. Supreme Court should overturn its longstanding *Roe v. Wade* decision, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) into law.

The law removes the need for a doctor to perform some abortions, moves abortion from the criminal code into the realm of public health issues and allows abortions up to birth where a doctor or midwife deems the fetus not viable, or its mother's health threatened in some way.

Agudath Israel is long on record in opposing *Roe v. Wade*. We decry this even more life-unfriendly legislation.

In line with its support for religious freedom, Agudath Israel opposes initiatives that would make abortion unlawful even in situations where termination of pregnancy is mandated by religious law – as it is, for example, under Jewish law when the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother. However, it is not necessary to make all abortions permissible in order to protect the rare instance when abortion is truly indicated.

Jewish tradition teaches that a human fetus has status and dignity, and that abortion is prohibited in the vast majority of pregnancies. But even beyond

that tradition, it should be apparent to all that termination of pregnancy raises profound moral concerns. Sadly, New York's new law pays no heed to those concerns.