

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Floor Speech on IVF

September 17, 2024

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: I rise to join my colleagues and want to thank my colleague, Senator Murray, for her leadership on this important issue over many, many years. But I join my colleagues to say it's time to put partisan politics aside and stay out of family planning issues, and leave that up to families in America.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle had an opportunity today to believe that women deserve the chance to start a family through IVF, the miracle for people who have been struggling with fertility challenges.

In 2022, more than 2,000 new babies were born in the state of Washington thanks to IVF. This is something we'd like to see every year, but as the court has struck down important issues, and states have gone on various efforts to try to restrict women's access to health care and full reproductive care, IVF has even been questioned.

Practically everyone knows someone who overcame the challenge, desperate to have a pregnancy, and the sadness of infertility, and that's probably why 86% of Americans say that IVF should be legal.

This afternoon, we voted on that right, the Right to IVF Act. That's what we were voting on, a straightforward vote, one of those that would just show the American people, the mainstream of America, that we agree with them. That's all we were trying to do, as people have punted around this very important right that now, because of actions by individual states, no longer seems to be guaranteed, and yet we all here could have cast a vote saying we wanted to protect it in voting for this act.

It was an opportunity for us to ask our colleagues who previously voted against this measure, to say that they actually agreed this time on IVF, to show that they mean what they say, not some version of a bill that basically curtails and makes it impossible for somebody to run an IVF organization. We have no time for that, no time for that.

My colleagues' voting history shows that if you didn't support IVF before and you didn't support it today, I'm not sure what it is that you think you support.

Democrats are trying to guarantee the access, and Republicans are blocking us. Democrats tried to guarantee the right to contraception, which 81% of Americans say should be protected, and Republicans blocked us. We tried to pass a law saying that you can't put a woman in jail for trying to leave her state just to get abortion care, and that was blocked. And we tried to pass a law saying that you can't put a health care worker in jail for performing abortions in their state where the procedure is legal, and Republicans blocked that too. And today, another block of just something very basic, the Right to IVF Act.

So, reproductive freedoms of all sorts, and family planning is under attack. We had a chance to speak as one voice and to talk about fertility treatments in the United States of America. Instead, families will continue to wonder what IVF is going to be available in the United States of America.

Americans should have the access to these reproductive rights. Americans should have the freedom to decide for themselves when and how to have children, and they should have the freedom to use IVF for their families and to plan, to start a family.

This summer, I released a health care report, along with my colleagues, that talked about people who lived in red states where they were forcing people to travel to other states just to get health care. It was so sad and scary to find out that basically, almost weekly, someone from Idaho was walking into a facility with a pregnancy complexity, only to be told, "I'm not going to see you," and then have them flown to a facility in Seattle. What kind of hardship are you putting on people?

And then with great sadness, I read this article that came out late last night about the death of a young woman from Georgia, I'm quoting the article now, who died after waiting 20 hours for a hospital to treat her complications from an abortion pill that showed the consequences of [...], Donald Trump's actions. End quote.

This is what we're doing to America. We are leaving reproductive choice up in the air. We are making women travel all over just to get care, and now we're telling Americans we don't even know if we believe in IVF!

This nonsense has to stop. This is about families planning. This is about families planning for their future. It is not about politicians putting hardships on patients seeking health care and then turning them away and affecting their lives, and in this case, the tragedy of this young woman.

I thank my colleague, Senator Murray, for helping organize us. I ask our colleagues, we can do better than this. They need to do better than this for the American people.

I thank the president, I yield the floor.