

## U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

### Floor Speech on the Freedom to Travel for Health Care Act

July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

[\[AUDIO\]](#)

**Sen. Cantwell:** While our colleagues are joining us to speak on behalf of the Cortez Masto language, I wanted to thank the Senator from Nevada for her legislation and just emphasize how important this is to people all through the United States, including my state that happens to be a border state.

But even in Seattle, providers are worried about a chilling effect. So I was wondering if the Senator from Nevada, while our colleagues have been talking about how this impacts individuals -- people seeking health care in other states -- what is happening now with the chilling effect to providers and their anxiety over people pursuing them for seeing patients from states in which *Roe v. Wade* is not fully protected.

**Sen. Cortez Masto:** So I appreciate, Mr. President, my colleague from Washington, and in the question posed because it's exactly part of the concern we have.

So I was home in Nevada, just recently, and I'm very proud Nevada is a pro-choice state. Our providers are concerned, there is a chilling effect when they are hearing other states that are literally criminalizing, looking to pass laws to criminalize a provider from providing health care and or woman traveling across state lines.

So what I hear from my providers is that we want to help women, we want them to come to our state, but if their state is going to pursue legislation or criminalize, or penalize, or prosecute us, or a private citizen can come after us from that state -- then we're having second thoughts about this, because they do not want to be embroiled in some sort of litigation.

And that's part of this. And I think it is so important. And thank you for the question, because that's exactly what their intent is. These anti-choice states, individuals who are taking away the liberty and freedom of women are also utilizing this chilling effect, this threat, this scare tactic for providers, employers, and anyone else who wants to help women to get to states where they can seek this health care that they need.

And that is the challenge we see. That's why this law is so important, because it's having an impact on our providers in these legitimate choice states like ours that want to provide this health care.

**Sen. Cantwell:** I thank the senator from Nevada, we were joined by the American Medical Association who also expressed this concern. They are speaking on behalf of the providers that want to provide reproductive choice in states that have passed this law and they are concerned. We need to get this legislation passed. I thank the Senator from Nevada.