

3/2/70

DRAFT OF STATEMENT FOR MAYOR LINDSAY
REPEAL OF THE ABORTION LAW

We have decided to support the Cook-Leichter bill to repeal the state's anti-abortion law. Our aim in supporting repeal is to make available to any woman who, during the early stages of her pregnancy (within the first three months), decides she does not want to bear a child, a safe abortion. We are supporting repeal this year instead of reform because reform implies that the judgment should be made by persons other than the woman herself.

In the last 10 years, 367 young women in New York City were known to have died as a result of an abortion or an attempted one, either self-inflicted or performed by an unqualified person and under unsafe circumstances. Such abortions have been responsible for the greatest proportion of maternal deaths in New York for many years and are more likely to occur in the low socio-economic and deprived districts of the City.

It is our expectation that repeal of the law will result in a substantially lowered maternal mortality rate by eliminating the greatest cause of maternal deaths. It should also result in a lowered infant mortality rate by reducing the number of damaged fetuses and the number of unwanted babies. Concomitant with the reduction of maternal and infant deaths, we would achieve significantly better physical and mental health for countless mothers and children and for society as a whole.