

ABORTION IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

November 2021

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION IS UNDER ATTACK IN THE U.S.

Over the course of the last decade, many states have passed laws that make it more difficult to get an abortion.

The year **2021** has surpassed all other years in legislative restrictions.

- As of July, **47 states** had introduced **561 abortion restrictions** to challenge the constitutional right to abortion.
- **90 restrictions**, including **11 abortion bans** in **8 states**, have been enacted.

Many of these restrictions are not legal under *Roe v. Wade*, so are now blocked in court.



In 1973, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court ruled that women have the right to access safe, legal abortion.

Critical court cases and federal legislation will decide the future of access to safe, legal abortion in the U.S.

This term, the Supreme Court will rule on Mississippi's **15-week abortion ban**. The decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization* could overturn *Roe v. Wade*, allowing state abortion bans.



Meanwhile, the Supreme Court allowed a Texas law to go into effect that **bans all abortions after about 6 weeks of pregnancy**. The unprecedented law authorizes any person to sue anyone "**who aids and abets abortion**," or "intends" to, including friends, drivers, etc., and collect a \$10,000 fine.

ABORTION IS COMMON IN THE U.S.



By age 45, nearly **1 in 4** women will have terminated a pregnancy.



In 2017, approximately **18%** of all pregnancies ended in abortion.



59% of abortions are obtained by women who already have children.



The reasons women have abortions include **limited finances, timing, and their partner or relationship status.**

When legal and accessible, abortion is extremely safe and complications are rare

LIMITING ACCESS TO ABORTION IS HARMFUL



Restrictive laws harm people's reproductive, mental and physical health, as well as the health of their children and communities.

Denying women abortion care creates economic hardship and insecurity which can last for years, negatively impacting their children.



The consequences of abortion restrictions are worse for people of color, young people, 2S-LGBTQIA+* individuals, low-income persons and other oppressed communities.

**Describes sexual and gender identities including Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Agender/Aromantic, plus other sexual orientation and gender identities*

EXAMPLES OF ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

Mandatory Counseling Laws:



Require the inclusion of false information about health risks as part of the consent process to discourage people from getting an abortion. These laws compromise the ethics of providers.

Trigger Laws:



These are designed to be “triggered” into making abortion illegal if Roe v. Wade is overturned or if the Supreme Court allows states to severely limit access.

Fetal Heartbeat Laws:



Ban abortion as soon as heart activity can be detected, as early as 6 weeks of pregnancy (or 4 weeks from conception). At this stage, many people do not know they are pregnant, so they miss the window to seek an abortion.

Mandatory Waiting Periods:



Require a person to wait up to 72 hours after their 1st doctor's visit to end a pregnancy, creating unnecessary appointments that force people to miss work, lose income, travel, find childcare, stay in hotels, etc.

Targeted Restrictions on Abortion Providers (TRAP) Laws:



Make operating an abortion clinic so expensive and complicated that many clinics are forced to close.

Abortion access is necessary for **HEALTH EQUITY**. Social inequality and restrictive laws in the U.S. create barriers to accessing abortion services based on people's:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Income
- Education
- Immigration Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Gender Identity
- Health Insurance
- Disability Status
- Location



Maintaining and expanding access to safe, legal abortion is a public health issue, especially for communities that now face difficulty getting the services they need. Protect safe, legal abortion.

Stay informed. Make your voice heard!

For references cited, please see publichealth.lacounty.gov/owh/Abortion