

Anti-Choice TRAP Laws Prevent Low-Income Women from Determining their Own Destiny

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Since *Roe v. Wade*, anti-choice activists and lawmakers have used nearly every trick and tactic to make abortion care illegal. One of those tactics is to pass deceptive clinic closure laws – also known as TRAP laws (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) – enacted by anti-choice politicians in a shameless effort to make it near impossible for women to exercise their constitutional right to choose. In 2013, Texas passed an especially egregious law, and a case challenging it will be before the Supreme Court on Wednesday. The justices will have the opportunity to stop the greatest threat to women’s reproductive freedom since the Supreme Court decided *Roe vs. Wade* over 40 years ago.

Prior to the Texas law, there were more than 40 clinics providing abortion care in Texas, and now, that number has dropped to 19. If the law is allowed to stand, then the number of clinics would be reduced to fewer than 10. We believe that women’s ability to access vital health care should not be determined by their zip code.

In total, states have passed over 250 laws since the 2010 midterm elections that restrict abortion access for millions of women—and many abortion restrictions particularly affect those of low income and from rural areas. During the same period, 28 states have enacted 30 TRAP laws.

While this public health crisis is affecting women across the board, we know it disproportionately hits those who are most vulnerable.

Women who have the least means are often impacted the most by the lack of nearby options for a safe and legal abortion. Eliminating clinics means they must find and pay for transportation to travel further and further from home, they need a job that will allow them the time off and they may need to pay for child care. [In one study in Texas](#), more than 100,000 women of reproductive age in Texas have attempted a self-induced abortion at some point in their lives without medical assistance.

One expert, in a legal challenge to a TRAP scheme in South Carolina, testified that even a \$25 increase in cost will prevent one or two percent of low-income women seeking abortion care from obtaining the procedure. Because most states fail to cover abortion services under their state-run medical-assistance programs, lower-income women may be forced to delay abortion services while they raise the necessary funds – thus increasing the risk to their health – or they may be forced to forgo legal abortion altogether.

When women make our own reproductive choices, we are empowered to lead healthier lives. When we are able to plan our families, we can fully participate in society and contribute in ways that enhance our communities and our livelihoods. The same health-care facilities that are being shuttered by anti-choice extremists for providing abortions also offer contraception and other family-planning services, prenatal care, cancer screenings, and even regular check-ups. The Texas law endangers us and the Court must find it unconstitutional—restoring the decisions about women’s health to women, where they belong.

For years, anti-choice activists have tried to overturn *Roe* and strip women of our fundamental rights and rob us of our agency to be who we want to and need to be in life. Those efforts have failed because most Americans trust women to make our own decisions about when and with whom we have families. Which is why TRAP laws are so insidious. By deceiving Americans, they are undermining the fundamental human rights of women all over this country and trapping them in circumstances against their will.

Having failed to make abortion illegal, anti-choice activists are trying instead to make it unavailable, and one strategy for doing so is to impose onerous, medically unnecessary restrictions on abortion providers. Those that single out abortion providers and create rigid, unreasonable standards that do not protect or improve patient safety, and which no other medical providers must meet, should be rejected.

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