

# State of Choice Between the Coasts



**personalPAC**

Pro-choice. No exceptions.

## MANDATORY WAITING PERIODS

Mandatory waiting periods, required only for abortion and no other medical procedure, require a woman to wait 24, 48 or, in some states, 72 hours after signing a consent form before having the procedure. The purpose of these laws is not to make abortions safer. Mandatory waiting periods double the burden on rural, young and low income women, who are forced to travel long distances twice and miss more work or school.

## MISINFORMED CONSENT

Misinformed consent is a state mandated lecture of anti-abortion propaganda that must be given to a woman seeking an abortion. The lecture completely distorts the nature of the procedure, the alternatives and the side effects. Receiving this lecture is misleading and humiliating for the woman who is already facing a difficult decision. Most of the misinformation is not medically accurate and is meant solely to dissuade her from having an abortion.

## TEEN ENDANGERMENT LAWS

Teen endangerment laws require teenagers to ask their parents for consent or give them notice prior to having an abortion. For a teen, parental consent and notice carry the same dangerous consequences. Teens from homes with healthy communication often involve an adult family member in the abortion decision without a law mandating notice or consent. But for teens from homes where there is violence, abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism, or where no parent is present, notice and consent laws have horrifying consequences. To avoid telling a parent about an unplanned pregnancy, even teens from stable homes have attempted to self-induce abortion. The only option for a teen who needs an abortion but can't tell her parents is to go to court to get a judicial bypass. But many teens can't or won't go to court and are forced to put their health at grave risk by having an illegal abortion, telling an abusive parent about the pregnancy or carrying the pregnancy to term.

## RESTRICTING LOW-INCOME WOMEN'S ACCESS

Low-income women have restricted access to reproductive healthcare because states prohibit public funding of abortions for women eligible for state medical assistance. The only exception is when the abortion is necessary to preserve the life of the woman. There are variations of this law that allow funding if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or if it would cause major harm to the health of the woman. These restrictions leave little choice for women who cannot afford an abortion. Some must forego paying rent and utilities and some desperate women even turn to drugs and prostitution to pay for the abortion.

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Emergency contraception is a high dose of birth control that stops conception from occurring. After failed birth control methods or unprotected sex, a woman who takes emergency contraception can reduce her chances of becoming pregnant by 89% when taken within 3 to 5 days of unprotected sex. Access to and use of emergency contraception drastically reduces teenage pregnancy and abortion rates.

## WHEN ROE V. WADE IS OVERTURNED

When *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, the legislatures in approximately 40 states would immediately pass laws to criminalize nearly all abortions. Illinois is the ONLY state between the coasts with a majority of elected officials who would likely vote to keep abortion legal. However, Illinois is always just one election away from an anti-choice Governor, anti-choice Attorney General and an anti-choice State House and State Senate.

## FORCED ULTRASOUNDS

Forcing a physician to perform an ultrasound on a woman before she has an abortion and then mandating that she view the ultrasound violates the physician/patient relationship and interferes with the professional standards of medical care. Healthcare professionals, not politicians, should decide what is best for their patients. Forcing a victim of rape or incest to view an ultrasound is cruel and unnecessary. While an ultrasound can be an important tool for doctors when used for medically necessary reasons, no medical procedure should be used to coerce or harass a patient. Forced ultrasound legislation does just that.

## T.R.A.P. LAWS

Targeted Regulations Against Providers (TRAP laws) are politically motivated, unnecessary and burdensome regulations that do nothing to improve the safety of medical care for women seeking an abortion. All types of medical care, including abortion, are already subject to extensive health and safety laws and regulations. TRAP laws target providers of abortion care in order to shut down clinics, including Planned Parenthood and other health care centers, and prevent physicians from being able to perform an abortion. Despite claims about "protecting women," these laws are blatant attempts to drive doctors out of practice and make abortion care more expensive and more difficult to obtain.

## DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Planned Parenthood is one of the most well known and widely supported organizations in the U.S., serving millions of women each year. The original Title X legislation that guaranteed government funding of Planned Parenthood was supported by the conservative Barry Goldwater, signed by President Richard Nixon and sponsored by the first President Bush when he was in Congress. Since then, however, the anti-abortion movement and its elected allies have waged a coordinated and carefully planned assault on Planned Parenthood. Closing all Planned Parenthood clinics once and for all is a top priority of anti-abortion activists. These activists will stop at nothing to keep women from getting the health care they need and deserve. Anti-abortionists have firebombed Planned Parenthood health centers and threatened patients and medical personnel across the country. Planned Parenthood is prohibited from using federal funds to pay for abortion. Thus, abortion opponents are fighting to end funding for pap smears, STD testing, breast cancer screenings and contraception—basic healthcare for women, not abortions. Lost on the right-wing is the fact that Planned Parenthood does more to reduce the need for abortion than all of their organizations and activists do combined.