

Dear

Banning women's reproductive rights strips women of their bodily autonomy, their constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws, and right to privacy. Women will no longer be equal individuals in our democracy and be rendered second-class citizens as their decisions about their reproductive health will be under the control of the state. Banning women's reproductive rights will exacerbate societal inequalities, falling disproportionately on women who are poor and reside in rural areas.

Given Indiana's severe maternal mortality rate, forcing Hoosier women to carry pregnancies against their will and against their medical well-being will result in increased death. Fearing prosecution, doctors will refuse to provide abortions even though it is the medical procedure that is required to save a mother's life when diagnosed with an ectopic pregnancy, septic uterus, or a miscarriage that a woman's body won't release. Child victims of rape or incest will be cruelly and unjustly forced to carry and birth babies that they may not be able to safely deliver and subject them unnecessarily to further trauma and anguish.

The Turnaway Study (longitudinal study examining the effects of unwanted pregnancy on women's lives. <https://www.ansirh.org/research/ongoing/turnaway-study>) shows that when women are unable to get wanted abortions, there are profound risks to their health and economic security as well as a shift in the trajectory of their lives with negative effects on their relationships, aspirational plans, and the wellbeing of their children. The study finds that women who were able to access the needed reproductive care are more financially stable, set more ambitious goals, raise children under more stable conditions, and are more likely to have a wanted child later. This means that denying women access to abortion care will detrimentally impact Indiana's economic health and quality of life.

Indiana's maternal mortality rate is 43.6 per 100,000, the third-highest in the country. Indiana has the 8th highest infant mortality rate in the country. And Indiana ranks 35 out of 50 as the best state to have a child. The GOP's failure to address these dismal state statistics as well as its refusal to pass quality daycare, foster care, family leave, and support for children living in poverty, makes clear that the goal of passing legislation to ban women's access to abortion is not about a deep concern for life but a purely political exercise of power to put the state in charge of women's reproductive healthcare decisions and steal from women their control over their bodies.

Taking away a woman's reproductive rights should not be determined by your belief of when life begins or your belief that abortion is "wrong." It is a question of whether women or the government should be making decisions about women's bodies. You cannot cry "freedom" to carry guns without permits and "my body, my choice" when required to wear a mask, then turn and use your power as an elected official to rip from women the freedom to control their own bodies.

Unfortunately, the Indiana legislature seems prepared to pass a total abortion ban - even in cases of rape, incest, and protecting the life of the mother. This will kill women. It will devastate the lives of rape and incest victims. It will detrimentally impact families. It will sentence more women and children to poverty (women denied a wanted abortion have 4X greater odds of living below the Federal Poverty Level), and will have a negative impact on Indiana's economy. It will drive young families from this state.

I urge you to vote for a woman's constitutional right to privacy and autonomy regarding her reproductive health. This is a right that should be equal for both men and women.

Respectfully,

Member of the League of Women Voters of Henry Co., IN

Name and full address