

Abortion Bans Harm Women's Reproductive Freedom and Cost Our Economy Billions of Dollars

Abortion restrictions are dangerous and costly for women, the U.S. economy, and state and local economies. One estimate finds that the 16 states that have banned abortion since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* are costing the United States \$68 billion per year in lost earnings and economic activity. Even these massive costs only capture some of the ways these restrictions disrupt women's lives, harm the economy, and deny women reproductive freedom.

To make matters worse, extremist Republican politicians and judges are pushing to roll back even more reproductive freedoms, while inflicting significant costs on the economy. Democrats in Congress and the Biden administration are fighting to expand and protect women's access to reproductive health care. This directly and critically supports women's fundamental freedom and personal health while also supporting the U.S. economy.

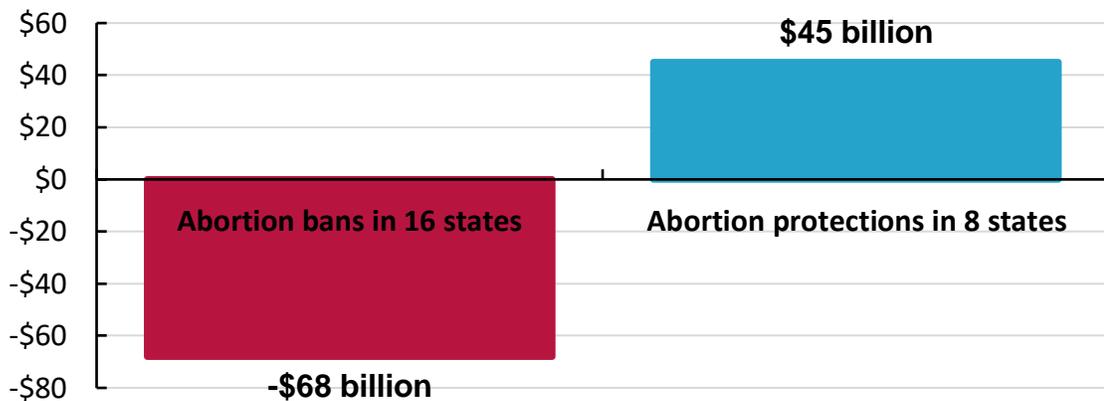
Abortion bans pose serious consequences for the U.S. economy

Abortion bans both restrict women's fundamental rights and make it harder for them to participate in the economy. Researchers are only beginning to uncover the massive economic toll of the *Dobbs* decision, but existing evidence suggests that it costs the economy billions while restricting millions of women's basic freedoms.

- One [estimate](#) from the Institute for Women's Policy Research finds that the 16 states with total abortion bans alone are costing the U.S. economy \$68 billion per year due to their restrictive policies. These costs come from reduced labor force participation and lower earnings for women, alongside higher employee turnover rates and more lost work hours.
- Costs like these particularly hit the nearly [23 million](#) reproductive-aged (ages 15-44) women who live in states that ban abortion at six weeks or less, a population that is disproportionately Black and Hispanic
- Compared to states with supportive abortion laws, one [study](#) estimates that states with restrictions on abortion saw more poor health outcomes for women and babies, totaling \$34.2 million in higher health costs per year.
- Additional potential economic impacts include [businesses](#) moving out of states with restrictions and costs related to the [criminalization](#) of providing and accessing abortion.
- In contrast, the 8 states with the strongest abortion protections, which include New Mexico, help the United States avoid \$45 billion in economic costs each year.

Abortion Bans Cost the Economy Money While The Strongest Abortion Protections Create Cost Savings

Billions of dollars of costs or avoided costs to the economy by type of state abortion policy



Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Guttmacher Institute

Note: The 16 states with bans are ID, ND, SD, OK, TX, MO, AR, LA, IN, KY, TN, MS, AL, FL, SC, and WV. The 8 with strongest protections are CA, OR, NM, MN, NY, MD, NJ, and VT.



Abortion restrictions are costly for women's health and financial well-being

On top of these economy-wide impacts, restrictions on [abortion](#) and [contraception](#) prevent women from being able to live their lives and support their families. This could prevent them from completing their education or pursuing a career if they are unable to seek care, or it could impose significant costs on them to access care far away from home. Either way, this creates significant economic costs both in the short-term and for years down the line.

- When women are [denied](#) abortions, they experience a large and long-term increase in financial distress. This is especially damaging because many women who seek an abortion live below the [poverty](#) line, and often cite financial concerns as a factor in their decision.
- One study found [worsened](#) anxiety and depression symptoms in people residing in states with post-*Dobbs* abortion restrictions, which may impact their ability to work.
- Over 171,000 women [traveled](#) away from their restrictive states to seek abortions in 2023, and nationally women are [traveling](#) three times longer than they were for care before the *Dobbs* decision.
 - This means that many more women had to pay for transportation and [lodging](#) and take time off work to travel just to receive care. Many others—including those in [low-wage](#) or [hourly](#) jobs—are unable to afford to travel and thus skip care altogether.
 - Women living in Congressional [districts](#) with long travel times to clinics are more likely to have lower earnings and experience larger gender wage gaps, meaning they may be unable to afford to receive care or it may eat up a large share of their income, impeding their ability to pay for other necessities like rent and groceries.
- Women who are unable to access abortions may also face challenges finding or affording the child care that's [vital](#) for their ability to travel to get an abortion and [support](#) their families.

State reproductive health restrictions also make the health worker shortage worse, and affect where students go to college

- Studies show that the *Dobbs* decision restricting abortion rights is already exacerbating the health care worker [shortage](#) in states with strict bans, as providers choose not to move to states where they are barred from providing vital reproductive health care.
 - In 2023, there were 10% fewer medical school [graduates](#) that applied to OB-GYN residency programs at schools in states with total abortion bans.
- Abortion restrictions are also impacting where students enroll in college, which may make it harder to fill job openings in these local labor markets.
 - A 2023 [survey](#) found that nearly three-quarters of enrolled college students factored in the reproductive health laws in their college's state when determining enrollment.
- Clinics in states that border those with abortion restrictions are now stepping in to do the additional work of caring for new out-of-state patients.
 - The number of abortions in the first half of 2023 in [New Mexico](#) was more than triple the figure from the first half of 2020, in large part due to women from Texas driving to the state to seek care.

Congressional Democrats and the Biden administration are working to protect women's access to reproductive health care

- Democrats in Congress are working to expand and protect reproductive health care through the [Right to IVF Act](#) and [Right to Contraception Act](#). Democrats also introduced the [Women's Health Protection Act](#)—cosponsored by JEC Chairman Heinrich—to restore reproductive rights stripped away by the *Dobbs* decision and prohibit states from imposing arbitrary restrictions that jeopardize access to abortion earlier in pregnancy.
- The [Abortion Care Capacity Enhancement and Support Services \(ACCESS\) Act](#), also cosponsored by JEC Chairman Heinrich, would establish a federal grant program for health care organizations to expand their capacity to provide abortion services and additional reproductive care in states where it is legal—particularly important for states like New Mexico that border states where it is not. JEC Chairman Heinrich also cosponsored the [Access to Family Building Act](#), which would protect every American's right to access IVF and other assisted reproductive technology.
- The Biden administration has taken additional [steps](#), including providing access to reproductive health care for veterans, safeguarding the privacy of patients and health care providers, and supporting Americans' ability to travel for reproductive health care. The Biden administration has also issued Executive Orders aimed at securing access to [reproductive](#) and other health care services and strengthening access to affordable, high-quality [contraception](#).

Recent evidence shows that there are massive economic costs to limiting women's fundamental reproductive freedoms. While extremist Republicans are committed to further restricting women's reproductive rights and incurring more and more costs on the whole economy, Democrats are fighting to protect women's reproductive freedom, which will support the economy in the process.