



## State, Providence, and Local Advocacy

Recently, there have been unprecedented efforts by states throughout the U.S. to restrict or ban abortion. In the 49 years since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, close to 1500 abortion restrictions were enacted, including mandatory waiting periods, parental consent laws, biased counseling, gestational bans, and targeted regulation of abortion providers (TRAP) laws. In 2021 alone, a record number of 108 state laws were enacted to restrict abortion access. The June 2022 *Dobbs* decision decimated the federal constitutional right to abortion and allowed the states to ban abortion entirely. The Guttmacher Institute regularly updates [a state law tracker](#).

As a result of state restrictions and bans, hundreds of clinics have been forced to close, providers denied the ability to provide necessary medical procedures, and patients left unable to obtain the health care services they need.

Individuals who can no longer obtain an abortion from a clinic in their state are now forced to travel to another state for abortion care. And they may face additional direct and indirect costs associated with travel logistics, childcare, and time off work, or self-manage their abortion or continue their pregnancy, putting their mental and physical health at risk. Dramatic increases in caseloads mean clinic capacity and staff are stretched thin, resulting in longer wait times for appointments, even for residents of states where abortion remains legal.<sup>5</sup> Denial of reproductive health care can also have disastrous consequences on one's economic security, causing them to fall into poverty.

## Reproductive Rights in Canada

In Canada, we see the interplay between abortion rights and abortion access as interconnected. While the right to an abortion is not restricted in Canada, access is. And, where the government blocks your access to exercise your rights, how real are your rights?

In 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *R. v. Morgentaler* that a federal law criminalizing abortion was unconstitutional. Canada currently has no applicable law and therefore enjoys no restriction on the right to an abortion at any stage. However, the provinces can exercise control over abortion access through the purse strings, as the provinces determine the flow of funds to limit abortion access. For example, there is legislation currently pending in New Brunswick over just that issue after New Brunswick denied funding for abortions at clinics and only funded them at two urban hospitals.

The issue of abortion access in general and safe access in particular, including in rural areas, were issues in the most recent Canadian election and continue to be a vehicle effectively to restrict the right to an abortion. Those on the front lines in Canada keep a close eye on the chipping away of rights in the United States since 1973 and the importing of tactics trying to restrict abortion access and, ultimately, abortion rights.