

## Testimony on SB8

### *Texas Law Chapter of If/When/How*

My name is Gloria Jones, I live in Austin, Texas, and I am writing to testify on behalf of the If/When/How chapter at The University of Texas School of Law. We, the students of If/When/How, vehemently oppose the Texas Legislature's recent steps to erase the constitutional right to abortion. Many of us have a personal stake in fighting these vile restrictions. As Texans, it has restricted our ability to access reproductive healthcare and make important, private healthcare decisions. As advocates, it has censored us and our support for reproductive rights. As women and childbearing folks, it has reinforced the belief that we are undeserving of the dignity and humanity inherent in maintaining bodily autonomy. And as law students, future lawyers, and future legal scholars, it has weakened our trust in the rule of law. Those at the Texas Legislature, merely blocks from our campus, should be serving as role models of legal integrity. But, rather than using the law to protect the Constitution and serve the people they are sworn to represent, they have used the force of law in a self-serving stunt to impose their own morality on all Texans through a system of vigilante enforcement. Condoning legislation such as this sets a dangerous precedent that state legislatures do not answer to the U.S. Constitution and will not be held accountable, even when they openly strip half the population of their constitutional rights.

We particularly wish to highlight the following points:

- (1) SB8 allows anybody in the United States to bring vigilante lawsuits without requiring they be personally affected, imposing no repercussions for meritless claims, and encouraging frivolous suits, contrary to basic policy goals of the court and litigation.
- (2) SB8's scope is purposefully undefined; without limits on its application, it is likely to impose First Amendment infringements.
- (3) SB8 forces survivors of rape and incest to carry pregnancies to term and give birth, even minors, which, in 2016, the United Nation's Human Rights Council identified as [tantamount to torture](#).
- (4) SB8 has already caused clinic closures in Texas and overcrowding in out-of-state abortion clinics, placing a substantial burden on non-Texans seeking abortions in those states.
- (5) SB8 disproportionately impacts People of Color, people with low-socioeconomic statuses, people under 18, and people in the immigration system.

We urge you to listen to the voices of Texans who are on-the-ground working to preserve reproductive healthcare access, and we ask you to see SB8 as the human rights violation that it is and help us in continuing to fight for increased access to abortion care. Thank you.