

Fighting Back Against Lies and Misinformation About Abortion Care

MAY 2019

Anti-abortion politicians are engaging in a dangerous effort to mislead and confuse the public about abortion care. They are peddling lies about abortion later in pregnancy in order to push their extreme agenda to ban abortion outright. Lawmakers and advocates are standing on solid ground when pushing back on this misinformation. Below are some ways to respond with the facts using an authentic and values-driven voice.

Punch Back with Facts (adapted from Planned Parenthood's [Messaging Guidance](#))

- These claims about abortion later in pregnancy are not true. This is a manufactured controversy.
- Abortion care later in pregnancy is rare. According to the Center for Disease Control, 99% of abortions occur before 21 weeks.
- An abortion that happens later in pregnancy is because of very challenging circumstances, such as when something in the pregnancy has gone very wrong and a woman's life or health is in danger or the fetus will not survive.
- Women and families in these situations face devastating decisions. They deserve our compassion and support — not our judgment and certainly not politicians telling them what to do.

Put Them On Their Heels

You have strong ground to stand on. You work every day to advance policies that make progress for women and families in real ways, you don't just pay it lip service. Call out their hypocrisy with your dedication to real policies that would make change and allow families to thrive. Express your indignation that anti-abortion politicians oppose the very policies that would enable people to have healthy pregnancies and support their families.

They are using lies to manipulate and mislead the public about abortion care. They are simply paving the way for their real goal — banning abortion outright.

- Across the country, access to abortion is under attack with increasing levels of inflammatory rhetoric and disregard for science, medicine or the realities of people's lives. An outrageous ban on abortion after only 6 weeks — before most people even know they are pregnant — has passed in four states. A bill was just passed by the Alabama Legislature that would criminalize abortion at any stage in pregnancy. A bill in Texas would have made it possible to impose the death penalty for women who seek abortion care.
- These bans are compounded by other efforts to cut off access to abortion care and family planning services, such as this administration's Title X gag rule, efforts to defund Planned Parenthood and the administration's rollback of contraceptive coverage.

If they care about healthy pregnancies and healthy babies then they should work to address the fact that the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed/westernized world, and that Black women are three to four times more likely to die in childbirth than white women.

- Highlight your support the MOMMA's Act, the MOMS Act, the MOMMIES Act and the Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act. All of these bills are focused on eliminating maternal health disparities and improving maternal health by expanding access to postpartum Medicaid coverage, funding maternal mortality review committees, adopting best practices and developing better quality standards.

The very same people peddling lies and purporting to care about pregnant women are the ones who would strip maternity care from health care coverage by undoing Affordable Care Act (ACA) protections.

- These are the same politicians that want to undo protections for pre-existing conditions and take away copay-free preventive care under the ACA — two key factors in helping women have healthy pregnancies. To support pregnant women, members of Congress should support legislation like the Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care More Affordable Act, which would protect people living with pre-existing conditions, lower health care costs and reverse the administration's harmful sabotage of the ACA. And, these same people would dismantle our nation's Medicaid program, which covers nearly 50% of all births in our country and is a frontline program for helping women have healthy pregnancy outcomes. For example, Tennessee legislators approved a bill this month that would make the state the first to request approval from the administration for a Medicaid block

grant, a move that could potentially cut their Medicaid program and eliminate health coverage for thousands of low-income pregnant women.

They would do nothing to guarantee safe, supportive workplaces for pregnant and parenting people.

- **Pregnant workers** are often forced out of their jobs because they are denied **reasonable accommodations** that would enable them to have a healthy pregnancy. They lose the income they need to support their family. Truly supporting pregnant people means supporting legislation like The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.
- A **national paid family and medical leave policy** would allow parents to care for new babies while remaining in the workforce. **Paid sick days** would help pregnant workers get the prenatal care they need. That's why you support the FAMILY Act and the Healthy Families Act.
- Pregnant people also need **fair pay**. Mothers with full-time, year-round jobs are paid 71 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. Supporting women and families means ensuring that mothers have fair pay so they can support their families.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.