

Abortion Access Is Key to Economic Freedom

Access to safe and legal abortion is an economic issue, not only an issue of bodily autonomy and individual agency. Access to abortion enables people to make the decisions that are right for them and their financial security. Furthermore, the ability to control if and when to have a child has lifelong economic consequences not only for the people directly impacted, but also their families and communities.

Many states put unnecessary restrictions on women seeking abortions, restrictions that have no basis in medical science and [imperil](#) women's health and well-being. These unnecessary restrictions cost local economies [\\$105 billion](#) per year. If these unnecessary restrictions were eliminated, U.S. GDP would be almost 0.5% higher.

Abortion access is key for individuals to have control over their economic security and future opportunities

Economists [agree](#) that abortion access is not just a matter of bodily autonomy and individual agency, but also of economic security and opportunity. Specifically, studies show that abortion access impacts:

- **Educational attainment.** Access to abortion increased women's probability of graduating [college](#) by 72%. The effect was even larger for Black women, whose chances of completing college increased 2- to 3-fold.
- **Earnings.** Being able to delay motherhood by one year due to access to legal abortion increased women's wages by 11% on average.
- **Labor force participation.** Access to abortion increased women's workforce participation, "increasing the probability of a woman working 40 weeks or more per year by almost [2 percentage points](#) (from 29 percent)."
- **Professional occupational attainment.** Access to abortion expanded career opportunities, including higher likelihood of attaining a professional role, by almost 40 percentage points.
- **Poverty.** Access to abortion not only shapes the economic outcomes of the pregnant person, but also the economic circumstances that children grow up in. Legalization of abortion decreased the percentage of children who grew up in poverty by [0.54 percentage points](#) and improved their future life outcomes, including increased college attendance rates.
- **Financial security.** Women who wanted an abortion, but who were unable to get one because they were just past the cut-off date, were subsequently more likely to have financial problems than the women who were able to obtain an abortion in time. Specifically, "Being denied an abortion increases the [amount of debt](#) 30 days or more past due by 78 percent and increases negative public records, such as bankruptcies and evictions, by 81 percent."

Access to abortion is crucial for racial, economic and geographic equity

Ensuring access to safe and legal abortions has implications for the economic and health equity of people of color because of the systematic inequalities of the American economy and healthcare system. [Numerous studies](#) have found that abortion access improves economic outcomes for Black women at a higher magnitude than for white women, helping to narrow racial economic disparities. Abortion legalization also reduced Black maternal mortality by [30 to 40%](#) by increasing access to safe and affordable procedures. Due to barriers to health care and ongoing racism and discrimination that cause worse maternal health outcomes (for example, Native American and Black communities experience 2- to 3-times higher rates of [pregnancy-related deaths](#), respectively, than white communities), restricting access to abortion will further exacerbate these long-standing health inequalities.

If the Supreme Court were to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, access to abortion would also become more geographically unequal in the United States than it already is. [Analysis](#) by the *New York Times* estimates that “If *Roe* were overturned, abortion would be likely to quickly become illegal in 22 states. Forty-one percent of women of childbearing age would see the nearest abortion clinic close, and the average distance they would have to travel to reach one would be 279 miles, up from 35 miles now.” These 22 states are concentrated in the South and Midwest, and are disproportionately economically disadvantaged, together accounting for only 35% of national GDP.

The uneven geographic burden created by increasing the distance required to travel to obtain a legal abortion in some parts of the country would further reinforce existing economic inequities. On average, the women in the 22 states where abortion would become illegal if *Roe* were overturned have median earnings only 89% of the national median, limiting their financial resources to be able to travel to obtain an abortion if abortion became illegal in their state. Besides the financial costs of the abortion itself, there are the costs of transportation, lodging and child care ([59%](#) of abortions are obtained by women who already have children). Further adding to the financial burden of obtaining an abortion is the lack of paid leave for workers, especially those at the bottom of the wage distribution. Only about [one-third](#) of workers in the bottom decile of the wage distribution have access to paid sick leave, versus 95% of workers in the top decile.

Protecting the right to abortion ensures that women have the freedom to make the right decision for themselves and their families

Evidence clearly shows what people already know—whether or not to have an abortion has far-reaching economic consequences for the individuals involved. That is why it is best left up to the individual to make the decision that is right for them, their family and their future.