

Abortion Access

The landmark Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* guaranteed the legal right to first trimester abortions for anyone who needed one, regardless of the reason. Since that ruling in 1973, political and social extremists have been working to restrict this constitutional right. Many states, including Virginia, have passed legislation that prohibits a minor from obtaining an abortion if she doesn't have her parents' consent. Others, like South Dakota, have gone as far as banning all abortions—even in the case of rape or incest. At Planned Parenthood, we know that restricting abortion will not keep them from happening.

- Oppressive restrictions supported by anti-choice hardliners (procedure bans, consent requirement, waiting periods) threaten women's health.
- The goal of anti-choice extremists is to make abortion illegal and, until then, impossible through physical and legal harassment.
- Women deserve access to all reproductive health care options, including safe and legal abortions.
- **Only information and prevention are effective in reducing abortion.**

In Virginia

- 84% of Virginia counties have no abortion provider.¹
- A woman under the age of eighteen is required to obtain the consent of one of her parents before having an abortion. Teens who fear for their safety can try to obtain a judicial bypass. This is a lengthy and confusing process, especially for a young woman in an already highly stressful situation.
- Women seeking abortions are required to wait 24 hours for the procedure after being given biased counseling that was created by politicians, not physicians.
- State employees or employees of agencies that receive state funds for post-partum care and family planning are not allowed to refer patients to abortion providers.
- Abortions are not covered for state employees under the Commonwealth's insurance unless: a) the procedure is medically necessary to save the mother's life; b) the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest that has been reported to the police or the state health agency; or c) a physician confirms the fetus has an incapacitating physical or mental deformity.
- Physicians, nurses and hospitals are allowed to refuse to provide information, referrals or services related to abortion if they have a written personal, moral or religious objection to it.

The Latest

- Legislation is routinely proposed in Virginia that would eliminate organizations that provide referrals for abortions, or are in any way connected to agencies that provide abortions, from receiving any state funding.
- Many bills have been introduced that would consider the fetus, even at a non-viable gestational age, to be a separate entity from a pregnant woman.

For more information on this Fact Sheet or other Planned Parenthood issues go to www.ppav.org or contact ppav@ppfa.org.

¹ Guttmacher Institute: State Facts About Virginia