



*Trust. Respect. Access.* is a multi-year campaign to promote policies that restore trust in Texans to make their own reproductive health care decisions, respect the dignity of Texans and the judgment of health care professionals, and ensure access to abortion and the support all Texas families need to thrive. Politicians have gone too far in restricting reproductive health care, and a broad coalition of organizations has come together to affirm an agenda for a better Texas.

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## **TRUST.**

***Trust Texans to make their own reproductive health care decisions, including the timing and spacing of their children.***

- Family planning, including contraception, has well-documented health benefits for mothers of all ages and for their newborns, families and communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Polling shows an overwhelming majority of Texans agree that students should receive comprehensive, age-appropriate and medically accurate sex education that includes information on birth control as well as abstinence.<sup>2</sup> Sexuality education in Texas public schools should not include language, instruction or exercises that shame young people or would make it more difficult for them to seek help from school professionals for issues arising from bullying, sexual assault, pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.
- Young people should be allowed to make science-based and medically-informed decisions about birth control, abortion, and parenting. Young people must be able to access birth control and abortion without parental consent. The current forced parental involvement law requires young people without supportive families to seek a judicial bypass, which research shows punishes, humiliates, and shames young people.<sup>3</sup> Research also indicates that with guidance and education, adolescents have the capability to make their own reproductive decisions.<sup>4 5</sup>
- In order to reduce maternal mortality in Texas, we must trust Black and Latinx women. Black women were most affected by pregnancy-related deaths according to the September 2018 Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report. The Texas Legislature and state agencies should implement all recommendations in this report.<sup>6</sup>
- The Patient Bill of Rights should ensure language access, including translation and interpretation services, in all health care settings.

## RESPECT.

***Respect the dignity of Texans to make their own health care decisions, and the medical and ethical judgment of health care professionals about the care each patient needs.***

- Health care providers have a professional and ethical obligation to provide care that is evidence-based, safe, individualized, and medically accurate.
- Politicians should not substitute their judgment for that of health care professionals nor interfere with the doctor-patient relationship, and should not force health care providers to choose between ignoring their medical training and ethical obligations for violating the law.
- The state-mandated lies doctors are forced to tell their patients in the so-called “Woman’s Right to Know” Act, includes the inaccurate claim that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer, which is unsupported by medical and scientific evidence.<sup>7 8</sup>
- Laws such as mandatory ultrasounds, biased counseling, and mandatory delays; bans on insurance and Medicaid coverage for abortion, and for specific procedures at certain gestational ages are political interference in medical decision-making and, according to medical experts, do nothing to make Texans safer.<sup>9</sup>
- Given the state’s shameful maternal mortality rate—one of the highest in the industrialized world—Texas lawmakers must truly respect the lives of all Texans by funding qualified and legitimate reproductive health care providers and programs.
- Texas’s anti-shackling law should be updated to close loopholes and ensure that no incarcerated people are put through the degrading and dehumanizing practice of shackling during or after childbirth.

## ACCESS.

***Guarantee access to abortion for all Texans and ensure all families have the support they need to thrive.***

- Texas lawmakers should ensure that everyone — regardless of their age, income, zip code, gender identity, sexuality, immigration status, or whether they are incarcerated or detained — has access to all reproductive health care options.
- Instead of limiting Texans’ options, lawmakers should champion policies like equal pay, paid sick and family leave to ensure all Texans have the economic security needed to support their families.
- Persons detained or incarcerated in the state of Texas should not only have the right to appropriate medical care, but access to care should include abortion and robust prenatal and postnatal care.
- Texas should expand Medicaid, and it should include coverage and guarantee access to expanded reproductive health care including doulas, midwives and abortion, and eliminate the ban on private coverage of abortion.
- Access to safe legal abortion is a public health necessity and should be protected in Texas — even if the Supreme Court overturns its precedent.
- Texans seeking abortion and contraception should be given the full benefit of medical advancements. The state should remove the restriction on the use of telemedicine to administer medication abortion, and ensure young people have access to birth control via telemedicine.

<sup>1</sup> Testimony, Guttmacher Institute, Submitted to the Institute of Medicine Committee on Preventative Services for Women. Jan. 2011, available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/CPSW-testimony.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Texans Stand Up for Access to Birth Control: Results from a Statewide Survey of Texas Voters*, Texas Freedom Network, (Feb. 19. 2013), <http://tfn.org/cms/assets/uploads/2015/11/PollMemoFinal.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Katie Coleman-Minahan, et al., *Young Women's Experience Obtaining Judicial Bypass for Abortion in Texas*, Journal of Adolescent Health. (2018), available at [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(18\)30307-0/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(18)30307-0/fulltext).

<sup>4</sup> Sue Alford, Emily Bridges, Tanya Gonzalez, et al., *Science and Success: Sex Education and Other Programs that Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 2nd ed., Advocates for Youth. (2008), <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/sciencesuccess.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Pamela K Kohler, et al., *Abstinence-only and Comprehensive Sex Education and the Initiation of Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy*, 42 Journal of Adolescent Health, 4 (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Texas Health and Human Services, *Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report*. Sep. 2018, available at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/pdf/MMMTFJointReport2018.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Committee Opinion No. 434. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Induced abortion and breast cancer risk*. June 2009, available at <http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Gynecologic-Practice/Induced-Abortion-and-Breast-Cancer-Risk>.

<sup>8</sup> Informed Consent Project, <http://informedconsentproject.com/states/texas/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Committee Opinion No. 613. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Increasing access to abortion*. November 2014, available at <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Health-Care-for-Underserved-Women/Increasing-Access-to-Abortion>.