

## Background and Realities about Repeal of PNA

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Illinois' forced Parental Notice of Abortion Act (PNA) harms young people. This law requires that when a person 17 years old or younger seeks an abortion, their health care provider must notify one of a specific set of adult family members—a parent, grandparent, step-parent they live with, or other legal guardian—at least 48 hours in advance of the procedure. If a young person cannot inform any of these individuals, they can seek a “judicial bypass”—asking permission from a judge to get the care they need without the governmentally-mandated family involvement.

Unnecessary burdens like PNA do not keep young people safe. This law only creates harmful hurdles for youth who need access to safe, timely abortion care.

- No law can force healthy family communications.
  - Building trusting family relationships takes time and intentional effort.
  - Forcing conversations regardless of a family's particular dynamics can and does endanger young people.
  - Most young people voluntarily tell a parent about an unplanned pregnancy. The younger the person, the more likely they are to involve a parent.
  - Young people who do not talk to a parent often involve another close family member or trusted adult.
  - We must trust young people to know who will keep them safe, affirmed, and healthy. To pretend that a law can make that choice puts youth in danger.
- Those young people who are not able to notify a designated family member about their abortion decision have real concerns about their well-being, and are the ones most likely to suffer harmful consequences.
  - Some reported experiences include:
    - Seeing an older family member forced to continue a pregnancy against their wishes.
    - Seeing an older family member kicked out of the house for getting pregnant at a young age.
    - Being told they will be kicked out of the house or isolated from the family for having an abortion.
    - Experiencing or seeing a sibling experience physical or emotional abuse when they anger or upset their parents.
    - Having a family member with a serious health condition—like cancer, heart disease, or depression—that could be worsened by stress or arguments.
    - A current, active crisis inside the family such as a contentious divorce or a parent facing deportation.
    - Being estranged from parents, and living with another adult family member who is not the young person's legal guardian.

- Judicial bypass is not a meaningful solution for those young people who cannot notify one of the designated family members.
  - A young person seeking an abortion does not need a judge; they need support from health care providers and people they trust, so that they can have real and timely access to information and health care.
  - The judicial bypass process imposes difficult, and sometimes insurmountable, obstacles for a young person who needs an abortion, including:
    - Finding and coordinating with an attorney to prepare for court.
    - Finding a time to get to and from court during business hours without being penalized for missing school.
    - Arranging for transportation to get to and from court.
  - Having to go through the judicial bypass process delays young people's access to time-sensitive abortion care. This can make the procedure more complicated and expensive, and prevent young people from accessing their preferred method of abortion.
  - The judicial bypass process is stressful and often traumatizing for young people.
    - Young people may fear the possibility of being identified by someone they know at the courthouse.
    - It is intimidating and overwhelming for a young person to have to share intimate details about their personal life with a complete stranger—especially when that stranger has the authority to impact their future.
    - Popular culture conveys appearing in court as doing something “wrong”, creating shame around the bypass process and the young person's health care decision.
  
- Young people—like all people—are capable of making decisions about their health and bodies.
  - In Illinois a pregnant minor can make a range of health care decisions—including deciding to continue a pregnancy and give birth, place a child for adoption, or have a caesarean delivery—without forced parental notice or going to court.
  - The only decision about health care during pregnancy that triggers forced family involvement is a young person's decision to access abortion care.
  - Developmental research shows that young people are capable of making informed decisions about how to handle an unplanned pregnancy.
  - All people, including young people, deserve access to health care, information and resources when they are faced with an important life decision—not barriers and delays—so that they can make the decisions that are right for themselves.
  
- Instead of laws that can hurt youth, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family and community.
  - These solutions include: medically-accurate, comprehensive sex education in all schools; increased access to affordable birth control and barrier methods; and resources for community-supported, authentic, and shame-free conversations between caretakers and young people within given and chosen families.

All young people deserve to be safe, affirmed, and healthy. Together, we can demand that our legislators protect youth by getting rid of harmful forced PNA.