

REPEAL HARMFUL BARRIERS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE FOR YOUTH

The **Parental Notice of Abortion Act (PNA)** requires a healthcare provider to notify an adult family member (parent, grandparent, step-parent living in the home, or legal guardian) at least 48 hours prior to performing an abortion for a patient under 18. The law creates a judicial bypass for those who cannot notify an adult family member. **Decades of research and experience demonstrate that forced parental involvement laws like this hurt young people and serve no valid purpose.**

Healthy family communication cannot be legislated: We all want young people to be able to talk to their parents about important life decisions. However, the idea that the government can force healthy family interactions ignores reality for many youth and the lasting injuries that result from enforcing these laws.

- The majority of young people voluntarily tell a parent about an unplanned pregnancy – and the younger a minor, the more likely they are to involve a parent. Those who do not tell a parent often involve another family member or trusted adult.
- The minority of young people who do not talk to their parents often have concerns such as: fear of physical or emotional abuse, loss of financial support, or homelessness; fear of being forced to give birth against their will; or serious family problems such as a parent who is sick or imprisoned.

The judicial bypass process itself harms young people:

The “judicial bypass” alternative to parental notice – where a young person must ask a judge for permission to have an abortion without notifying a parent – compounds the harms for young people.

- Youth face major logistical hurdles accessing a judicial bypass – such as getting away from school or home during business hours without raising suspicion, and travelling to and from a courthouse.
- Young people are understandably distressed by being required to go to court and to tell the most intimate details of their life to a stranger.

The judicial bypass process serves no purpose: Since the law went into effect in 2013, judges granted more than 99.5 percent of bypass requests throughout Illinois because they believed the young people were mature enough to make this decision independently, in consultation with their health care providers and chosen support systems.

These harmful restrictions are irrational: Research shows young people are capable of making informed decisions about pregnancy. Illinois law recognizes this by permitting pregnant minors to make all other medical decisions – even those involving greater risk than a safe, legal abortion – without involving a parent or going to court. A pregnant minor can decide independently whether to continue the pregnancy and give birth, consent to far riskier medical care such as a cesarean section, or place a child for adoption. Only when a young person decides to end their pregnancy does the government force them to involve their family.

Every leading medical organization opposes forced parental involvement laws, including: The American Medical Association; The American Academy of Pediatrics; The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; The Society for Adolescent Medicine; and The American Public Health Association.

Supporting Organizations

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
ACLU of Illinois
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
American Association of University Women
Apna Ghar, Inc. (Our Home)
Catholics for Choice
Chicago Abortion Fund
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation
Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
Chicago Foundation for Women
Chicago NOW
Chicago Votes
Citizen Action Illinois
Coalition for a Better Illinois 6th
Democratic Women of McDonough County
Equality Illinois
EverThrive Illinois
Family Planning Associates
Friends Who March
Health and Medicine Policy Research Group
Hope Clinic for Women
Human Rights Watch Chicago
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health
Illinois Choice Action Team
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Illinois Democratic Women
Illinois Handmaids
Illinois NOW
Indivisible Chicago
Indivisible Illinois
Lake County Democratic Women
League of Women Voters Illinois
Life Span
Mainstream Republican Committee
McHenry County Citizens for Choice
McHenry NOW
Midwest Access Coalition
Midwest Access Project
Men4Choice
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of Social Workers Illinois Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women Illinois
North & NW Suburban NOW
Personal PAC
Planned Parenthood Illinois Action
Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Health Access Project – Illinois Cluster
Reproductive Transparency Now
Resilience
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
She Votes Illinois
Sierra Club Illinois
The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence
Vote Mama
Whole Woman's Health
Whole Woman's Health Alliance
Winnebago County Citizens for Choice
Women's March Chicago
Women's March Illinois
Zioness Chicago Chapter

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