

# REMOVE 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 6<sup>th</sup>  
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 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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