A Tale Of Two Americas — RePROs Fight Back's Annual Report Card Shows An Unfolding Human Rights Crisis: U.S. Gets An "F"

February 16, 2023, Washington, D.C.



Today, <u>rePROs Fight Back</u>, an initiative of the nonprofit <u>Population Institute</u>, released its annual <u>50 State Report Card on Reproductive Health and Rights</u> covering 2022. Twenty-six states, and the US as a whole, received a failing grade.

The report card, originally created by the Population Institute over a decade ago and updated annually, tracks multiple indicators of reproductive health and rights. In 2022, US reproductive rights were decimated as the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade which protected abortion rights. 14 states banned or severely restricted access to abortion. A total of 24 states are expected to ban abortion in the near future. According to the Guttmacher Institute, 18 million women* of reproductive age, plus more transgender and non-binary people, are now unable to access abortion in the state where they live. Meanwhile, a Trump appointed federal judge in Texas could rule as soon as next week on a suit that could revoke FDA approval of mifepristone, potentially blocking access nationwide to a key drug used in medication abortions.

"The report card's dismally low grades reflect a human rights crisis unfolding in this country," said Jennie Wetter, Director of rePROs Fight Back. "People in large regions of the county are prevented from accessing abortion care. Many must either travel great distances to get it, or if they aren't able to travel, they may be forced to carry unwanted pregnancies. And there is no indication that anti-rights advocates will stop at abortion. We have already seen clear signs that they intend to attack trans peoples' access to healthcare and other LGBTQ+ rights, medication abortion, contraception, and much more."

The rePROs report card methodology ranks each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia on three broad indicators relating to reproductive health and rights: prevention, affordability, and access. Criteria include sex education, minors' access to birth control, access to emergency contraception in the emergency room, Medicaid expansion including family planning expansion, abortion policy, and more. Based on their composite scores of 0-100, each state received a "core" grade of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "F". Some states receive an additional "plus" or "minus" grade for factors not reflected in the core grade.

The following states received a failing grade in this year's report card: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Four states received an "A:" California, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Washington. You can view each individual state's report card here.

For the fourth year in a row, the U.S. as a whole received an "F". The major reason was the June 2022 Supreme Court decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, which eliminated the federal right to abortion access and sent it back to individual states to decide abortion laws. As a result, people who live in states where abortion is or will be illegal must either travel to access abortion care, expose themselves to legal risk by self-managing, or be forced to carry the pregnancy to term.

"This is a gross violation of human rights and strikes a blow to values of individual agency, bodily autonomy, and equitable access to health care," said Wetter. "The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe sent reverberations around the country. The effects are devastating and not felt equally. BIPOC, people with low-incomes, young people, those with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, and those at multiple intersections of these identities are the most impacted. In the wake of Dobbs, it became more apparent than ever that there are two Americas: one in which people can exercise their reproductive rights and another in which they cannot. We must refuse to accept this as a new normal; we must fight for a future with reproductive freedom for all."

*rePROs Fight Back (rePROs) intentionally uses the term "women" when describing data that did not include nonbinary people or trans men in the research. Otherwise, rePROs is committed to using gender-inclusive language to represent all individuals who deserve full access to SRHR services.

For the complete report card and additional information, please visit: https://www.populationinstitute.org/resource/a-tale-of-two-americas/

Special thanks to the Guttmacher Institute whose research made this report card possible.