

Policy Summary - Health:

Restoring Abortion Access and Reproductive Rights in Texas

August 2026



1. **Texas's abortion ban has not ended abortion and is not an effective strategy for reducing unintended pregnancies.** Texas law generally prohibits doctors from providing abortion care and **does not include exceptions for rape, incest, severe or fatal fetal conditions, or threats to a patient's mental health.** Instead, the ban has shifted where and how Texans obtain abortion care. In 2025, [almost 23,000 Texans traveled to another state](#) for care, while approximately 42,000 received abortion medication through telehealth from providers in states with legal protections.
2. **The ban can delay necessary pregnancy care and places the heaviest burdens on Texans with the fewest resources.** Abortion and miscarriage care often involve the same medications and procedures, which can leave doctors and hospitals uncertain about when treatment is legally protected. A review of Texas hospital data found that [blood transfusions during emergency-room visits for early miscarriage increased by 54 percent](#) after abortion became a felony. Patients who must leave Texas may also need to pay for travel, lodging, childcare, medical care, and time away from work, making access much harder for people with limited income, transportation, or family support.
3. **Texas clarified its narrow medical exception in 2025, but did not restore abortion rights.** The [Life of the Mother Act](#) clarified that doctors do not have to wait until a patient is close to death or has already suffered permanent harm before providing emergency care. However, it did not create exceptions for rape, incest, severe or fatal fetal conditions, or many serious health risks. Texas also created [new private lawsuits involving abortion pills](#), with awards of at least \$100,000 for each violation. These laws remain more restrictive than most Texans want: [83 percent support exceptions for rape or incest and 84 percent support exceptions for fatal fetal conditions](#)
4. **Texas legislators should replace ineffective restrictions with policies that protect patients and reduce unintended pregnancies.**
 - **Restore abortion access and protect medical judgment**, including care for rape, incest, severe or fatal fetal conditions, and serious threats to a patient's physical or mental health.
 - **Remove criminal penalties, professional sanctions, and private lawsuit systems** that punish doctors and others for providing or helping patients obtain legal care.
 - **Require clear hospital treatment plans and regular training** for miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, infection, heavy bleeding, and other pregnancy emergencies.
 - **Use proven strategies to reduce unintended pregnancies**, including medically accurate sex education, affordable contraception, and stronger family-planning services. These policies address unintended pregnancy before it occurs rather than restricting care after a patient is already pregnant.
 - **Support nationwide protections** for abortion, contraception, interstate travel, care provided across state lines, and emergency treatment.

More Information

- [Center for Reproductive Rights](#): Zurawski v. State of Texas
- [Guttmacher Institute](#): Patterns of Travel for Abortion Care Continued to Shift in 2025
- [National Library of Medicine](#): Advancing knowledge and public health: a scientific exploration of abortion safety.
- Center for Policy Progress full paper – Restoring Abortion Access and Reproductive Rights in Texas

For questions and comments, contact us at info@centerforpolicyprogress.org.