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English 3

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Air Stream

### The Ugly Truth on Abortion Control Acts

One-third of these pregnancies are unintended, and one-fifth end with an abortion.

However, the level of access to abortions varies widely according to law. In 1973, Roe v. Wade was a court case that guaranteed women across America the right to an abortion. But in 1989, the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act was signed into law. Although abortion is completely legal in the United States, these control acts have made it difficult, and even dangerous for women to have an abortion in Pennsylvania because they limit access to actual services.

As of today, Pennsylvania has a long restriction list when it comes to abortion. One of the first and most pressing things on that list is that before the abortion, “a woman must receive state-directed counseling that includes information designed to discourage her from having an abortion and then wait 24 hours before the procedure.” This causes a problem because it inevitably hinders women from obtaining the medical procedure. It causes the patient to have to make multiple appointments and to travel unnecessarily. In addition to this constraint, there is limited geographic access: Seventy-eight percent of the counties in Pennsylvania don’t have an abortion provider, and six Planned Parenthoods with abortion clinics have closed since 2013. A woman from Pennsylvania -who preferred to remain anonymous- shared with the Huffington Post how she had to go out of her way for her appointment. She states, “ ...I was told I couldn’t get the procedure done there, as they do not have the right medical staff or equipment to perform

abortions — I was told only specific Planned Parenthood locations perform abortions and on certain days. I had to drive more than an hour away to get it done.” That means that a majority of the time, women within the state are already going out of their way just to receive a consultation.

Another problem with this act is that the information that doctors are telling women in order to avert them from getting an abortion is false. For instance, medical professionals are required by the control act to tell women that the chance of them having breast cancer will increase from them having an abortion. According to The American Cancer Society, “Researchers have looked at the possible link between abortion and breast cancer for many years, but this has been a difficult area to study.” Simply meaning that it hasn’t been proven.

Furthermore, another concerning issue with Pennsylvania abortion laws is that the state representatives have made abortion a crime after the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, which is 4 weeks less than the original amount. Evidence of how dangerous changing this law can be lies within this Pennsylvania woman’s story. Dana, age 44, shares with Huffington Post how she basically had to ask for permission to live. Dana talks about how at 28 weeks of her pregnancy, she began bleeding and developed a uterine infection. She needed the abortion to in order to stay alive, but because she was past 20 weeks the hospital couldn’t do anything until they talked to the administrator to get permission for the abortion. Dana’s life was on the line, but she was told to wait due to control acts that make abortion illegal after a certain amount of weeks. Not everyone’s pregnancy goes smoothly or as expected. In moments when it is crucial to a woman’s life, she should be able to get an abortion in order to save herself.

Also, the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act has another restriction stating that “Abortion is covered in insurance policies for public employees only in cases of life endangerment, rape or incest.” Since abortion is viewed as a “voluntary procedure” it isn’t covered by insurance outside of these reasons, which puts the financial burden on the woman. Another Pennsylvania woman shares with Huffington Post that “... they determined I could afford the entire fee, which near me is \$450. I only made about \$840 a month, and had to dip into my savings, which fortunately I had because I have been working since I was young and saving.” In this instance, this woman was able to afford the procedure. But that won’t always be the case for everyone because there are many economic factors that might inhibit women from receiving an abortion.

When asked, the Pennsylvania state legislature might say that these control acts protect more women trying to get an abortion. But on closer inspection, it actually hinders them and makes the process more difficult, which can lead to it becoming more dangerous. Legality isn’t an issue with obtaining an abortion, it’s the control acts set in place that make it tremendously difficult.

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