



## Abortion Rights and Access: Fact Sheet

In the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a woman, in consultation with her physician, has a constitutionally protected right to choose abortion in the early stages of pregnancy<sup>1</sup>. This decision was met with intense opposition and in 1976 the Hyde Amendment was adopted, prohibiting Medicaid coverage for abortion services. Since that time the Hyde Amendment has been reintroduced annually during appropriations (funding cycle) and attached to several bills to ensure that federal funds continue to be restricted for abortion.

In 1992, the Supreme Court upheld the basic right of women to obtain legal, medically-safe abortions in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. However, it also expanded the ability of the states to enact all but the most extreme restrictions on women's access to abortion. States seized the opportunity and have proceeded to introduce a number of restrictive abortion laws limiting and dictating when, where and how women are able to access safe and affordable reproduction health services. TRAP Laws, Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers, are a preferred tactic for state legislators and serve to:

- Limit the provision of care only to physicians;
- Require clinical practices to adhere to expensive medical hospital standards;
- Require abortion providers to get admitting privileges; and
- Require facilities to have transfer agreements with a local hospital.

Since 2010, 282 abortion-related laws have been introduced, with over 50 in the first half of 2015.<sup>2</sup> Other anti-abortion restrictions consistently presented and passed by state legislatures, and often contrary to sound public health practice, include:

- Requiring ultrasound scans even when not medically indicated;
- Banning funds for health centers that provide affordable birth control and health care to low-income women if the center also provides abortions;
- Banning insurance coverage of abortion of low-income women; and
- Requiring long waiting periods.

### ***In Our Own Voice believes:***

Reproductive Justice is the human right to control our bodies, our sexuality, our gender, our work and our reproduction. That right can only be achieved when all women and girls have the complete economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives.

### Facts about Black Women and Access to Safe Abortion Services

The ongoing battle to restrict access to legal and medically safe abortions disproportionately affects the poor, young and women of color. Black women have been a particularly favorite target for divisive and harmful anti-abortion messages; although Black women only account for 37 percent of all legal abortions, as compared to 55 percent among white women in 2011<sup>3</sup>. Twenty-seven percent of Black people live below the poverty level in the U.S., while 10 percent of white people live in poverty. So the restrictions on the use

<sup>1</sup> Guttmacher Institute, "State Facts About Abortion." Fact Sheet. New York. June 2015. <http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/sfaa.html>.

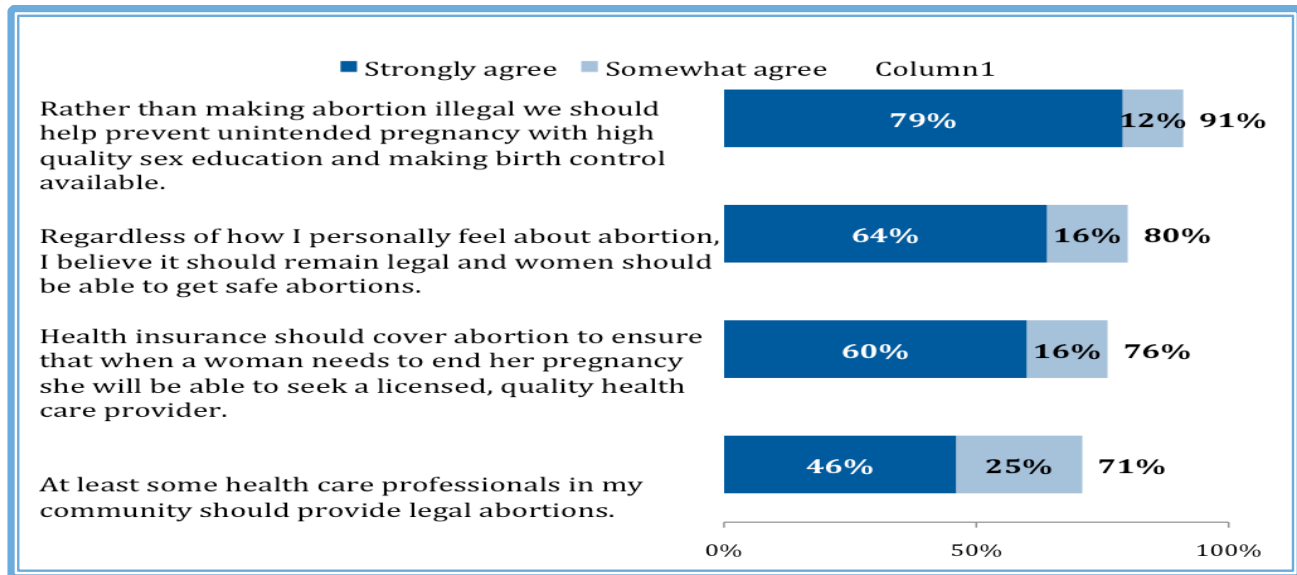
<sup>2</sup> Guttmacher Institute, "Laws Affecting Reproductive Health and Rights: State Trends at Midyear, 2015." Publication. New York. July 1, 2015. <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/inthenews/2015/07/01/>.

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, "Reported Legal Abortions by Race of Women Who Obtained Abortion by the State of Occurrence." Table. 2011. <http://kff.org/womens-health-policy/state-indicator/abortions-by-race/>.

of federal funds to support medical abortions significantly impacts Black women and their families<sup>4</sup>. In 2011-12, the median baseline cost of a surgical abortion at 10 weeks gestation was \$495; not including other potential costs associated with transportation, childcare and time off work<sup>5</sup>.

### Perceptions and Beliefs<sup>6</sup>

Black women and men overwhelmingly support keeping abortion legal, ensuring access to affordable contraceptives and teaching comprehensive sex education. Almost eight in ten (79%) Black women and men, of all ages and religious persuasion, believe that abortion should remain legal and be available in their communities.



**Black Women and Men Show Strong Support for Keeping Abortion Legal and Available**

Eighty-five percent of Black women and men agreed with the statement, “When it comes to abortion, we should trust Black women to make the important personal decisions that are best for themselves and their families.”

### Moving in the Right Direction

On July 8, 2015 Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY), and more than 70 Members of Congress introduced the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act (H.R. 2972), that ensures health coverage for abortion for every woman no matter her income, insurer or where she lives. This bill marks long-needed change for women and their families by creating two important standards for reproductive health:

- First, it respects that every woman should be able to make her own decisions about pregnancy. If a woman gets her health care through the federal government, she will be covered for all pregnancy-related care, including abortion

<sup>4</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, “Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity.” Table. 2013. <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-raceethnicity/>.

<sup>5</sup> Guttmacher Institute, “The Cost of Abortion...Remained Stable Between 2008 and 2012.” Press Release. New York. July 2014. <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/nr/2014/07/02/>.

<sup>6</sup> African-American Attitudes on Abortion, Contraception, and Teen Sexual Health (2013). Belden-Russonello Strategists LLC., Washington DC. February 2013. <http://www.blackrj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/media-memo.pdf> Accessed 7/1/15

- Second, it prohibits political interference with decisions of private health insurance companies to offer coverage for abortion care.