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Southwest Women's Law Center Official Statement on Texas Senate Bill 8

The Southwest Women's Law Center (SWLC) is outraged and saddened that women's health, fundamental freedoms, and constitutional rights continue to be attacked in America. On September 1, 2021, Senate Bill 8 took effect in Texas. This bill is aimed at banning safe abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually around 6-weeks' gestation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in 2018 more than 90% of abortions were performed around or before 13-weeks' gestation. Most women seeking abortions do not know they are pregnant until after the 6 -week mark. Texas Senate Bill 8 doesn't stop abortion. This bill only makes abortions harder to obtain and will endanger the lives of women in Texas.

This has been a consistent effort by lawmakers and anti-abortion zealots in Texas over the last several decades. In 2013, lawmakers attempted a similar abortion ban known as House Bill 2. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled the ban was unconstitutional in 2017. But the damage was already done to abortion access in Texas. As a result, less than 20 abortion clinics exist today in Texas. Now, lawmakers in Texas have taken further action and have banned abortions after 6-weeks with the passing of Senate Bill 8.

Under Senate Bill 8, seeking an abortion is not criminalized. However, those who assist the person or perform the abortion may face civil liability. Worse, this **law actively encourages private citizens, with no standing, to act as bounty hunters** by awarding them \$10,000 if they successfully sue another person for providing an abortion or assisting someone who gets an abortion after 6-weeks' gestation.

This abortion ban is intentionally designed to overwhelm clinics in the state with lawsuits and legal bills and force them to shut down. Due to structural racism and inequities, laws like Texas' abortion ban disproportionately harms people of color, people with low incomes, and those living in rural areas. **This bill will effectively end safe abortion access in Texas.**

Unfortunately, these bans will not stop in Texas. Oklahoma passed a similar bill that is expected to go into effect on November 1, 2021. The Oklahoma bill makes performing an abortion a homicide. Florida is now also considering a bill like the abortion ban in Texas.

Women in New Mexico are currently immune from the laws in other states. But this does not mean we should sit by and watch our sisters in other states suffer. We at the

Southwest Women's Law Center are involved in efforts to support those seeking safe abortions and encourage others to help however they can.

Organizations

Below is a list of organizations currently engaged in the fight for Women's access to safe and legal reproductive health services:

Organization	What they are doing	Website
ACLU	Pursing a lawsuit regarding the Texas safe abortion ban.	https://www.aclu.org/
Fund Texas Choice	Provides travel and accommodation assistance to Texas residents.	https://fundtexaschoice.org/
Lilith Fund	Provides financial assistance and emotional support	https://www.lilithfund.org/
Avow and Lilith Fund	Provides location of clinics, funding information, free legal help for pregnant minors, counseling, and other help.	https://needabortion.org
National Network of Abortion Funds	Provides a list of organization that can help fund an abortion in all 50 states.	https://abortionfunds.org/need-abortion/

We encourage supporters to contact the organizations directly to provide monetary support.

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