

The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to abortion. States like Washington that still protect abortion access will play a critical role in providing care for people from states that ban or severely restrict abortion and gender-affirming care.

The impacts of abortion restrictions are disproportionately harmful to those who already face systemic barriers to healthcare — Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, LGBTQIA+ communities, undocumented immigrants, young people, those living in rural communities, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Abortion access and reproductive freedom directly impacts a wide range of socioeconomic outcomes.

We have a unique and urgent opportunity to pass a comprehensive slate of policies to protect and expand abortion access, to protect the rights and safety of patients and providers, and to support the vital work of our reproductive health providers as they face unprecedented challenges.

Pro-Choice Washington and our partners are working to pass a package of innovative bills designed to ensure that Washington successfully fulfills its role as an abortion sanctuary state and [its commitment to reproductive freedom](#).



2023 Legislative Agenda

Priority Legislation

Keep Our Care Act (SB 5241, HB 1263)

What it does: **Keep Our Care Act (KOCA)** would ensure that mergers and acquisitions of healthcare systems, such as hospitals, improve rather than harm access to affordable, quality care. The bill includes:

- A prohibition on health entity consolidations that diminish access to care
- Attorney General oversight and enforcement power to ensure that health entity consolidations do not negatively impact access to care
- A health equity assessment to help health entity consolidations better serve the needs of marginalized communities
- Community input on proposed consolidations through public comment and hearings

Why it matters: Large, corporate health systems are gobbling up smaller, community-based healthcare. Unchecked mergers drive up prices and restrict access to critical health care services, including abortion. After decades of rampant consolidation, 50% of hospital beds are controlled by healthcare systems that have policies to deny patients reproductive, gender-affirming, and end-of-life care. Many patients traveling to Washington for reproductive or gender-affirming care find themselves in these private health systems. After being denied care at home, they are once again turned away. Delays in abortion care increases a patient's physical, mental, and financial risks. Support the Keep Our Care Act to protect access to quality affordable healthcare.

End Cost-Sharing for Abortion Care (SB 5242, HB 1115)

What it does: This bill would require insurance companies to cover 100% of the costs for abortion care procedures and services. Currently, when patients receive care covered by their insurance plan, they share the cost in the form of a copayment (copays), a deductible, or coinsurance. Ending cost-sharing would make abortion care more accessible by ensuring that patients can access care without cost to themselves.

Why it matters: Copays and high deductibles can make abortion expensive for patients. If someone needs this care and has to choose between rent or an abortion, they may not get the care they need. Essential health services like abortion care should be fully accessible to all people, regardless of their income level.

Washington My Health, My Data Act (SB 5351, HB 1155)

What it does: The Washington My Health, My Data Act will protect people's personal health information by preventing it from being shared without their consent, including by fake clinics known as Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) or with law enforcement in states that criminalize abortion and gender-affirming care.

Why it matters: In July 2022, a Nebraskan woman and her teenage daughter were prosecuted for seeking abortion care when Meta handed over their direct messages to the police. Conversations that patients believe are private are being weaponized to criminalize and harm abortion-seekers, particularly women of color, for their health care decisions.

Provider Licenses & Malpractice

Insurance (SB 5400, HB 1340)

What it does: This law would ensure that care providers can continue providing abortion care in Washington, regardless of actions taken in states with abortion bans. Abortion providers risk losing their medical licenses and access to malpractice insurance due to hostile law suits and criminal investigations based in states with cruel and draconian bans on abortion care.

Why it matters: Abortion providers should be able to do their jobs to protect the health and well-being of patients without fear of criminalization or risk to their economic security. Our state already faces limited abortion and other health care workers, which can lead to increased wait times, longer travel distances, and loss of access to care for patients.

Shield Law (SB 5489 HB 1469)

What it does: This bill will strengthen legal protections for abortion providers, patients, and helpers in Washington state by preventing local entities from cooperating with out-of state investigations. This bill will shield patients and providers from being criminalized for providing or accessing abortion or gender-affirming care in Washington state.

Why it matters: With the loss of *Roe v. Wade*, patients from states with abortion bans now rely on states like Washington to provide the care they need. In fact, the [Guttmacher Institute](#) estimates that there will be 385% more out-of-state patients expected to seek abortions in Washington than before *Roe* was overturned. But providers and patients face frightening uncertainty about whether they could be criminalized for seeking or providing legal abortion care in Washington. By passing a shield law, Washington can provide lifesaving refuge to patients and protect the health care workers who provide these vital services.

Securing Critical Funding for Clinics and Providers

As a sanctuary state, Washington now plays a critical role in preserving and providing abortion care to patients from states with abortion bans. Resources for abortion and reproductive care were strained before June 2022, so we are seeking additional funding for providers and clinics to meet the expected increase in demand.

Biennial Budget

In addition to the urgent, supplemental funding, we are requesting a biennial budget to help address inequities in access to abortion and reproductive healthcare within Washington state.

Police Accountability

What it does: The Washington Coalition for Police Accountability advocates for the adoption and implementation of statewide policies to reduce police violence and increase police accountability. The coalition is calling for a package of common sense reforms that will help keep our communities safer.

Why it matters: Police brutality is among the biggest threats to healthy and safe Black families in America. Increased stress and trauma of structural racism for Black parents and families is linked with higher infant and maternal mortality rates. Black women are four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. To ensure that the voices of families and communities impacted by police violence are heard, we need to strengthen protections against police violence.

Progressive Revenue

What it does: Pro-Choice Washington is a member of Balance Our Tax Code, a coalition that works to make Washington's tax code works for all of us, not just the wealthy few. Our vision is a more just and equitable tax code that creates a strong future where communities have the resources they need to thrive.

Why it matters: Washington has one of the least equitable tax codes in the country where low-income households are taxed at a higher rate than the wealthiest. Our tax code limits access to essential services, including affordable reproductive healthcare, other healthcare programs, good schools, and public transportation. We need to make sure the wealthiest Washingtonians and large corporations pay what they owe through taxes so we can fund schools, ensure quality healthcare for anyone who needs it, and provide stability for our families.

Health Equity for Immigrants

What it does: The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign works to improve access to affordable health care and coverage for all Washingtonians, prioritizing equitable access for individuals who are uninsured and underinsured due to immigration status restrictions. Last session, Washington state committed to providing a pathway to affordable health coverage for everyone by 2024. This session, the campaign is working to implement that commitment and continue the work.

Why it matters: Immigrant communities and people of color need better access to health care coverage and services. Pro-Choice Washington will follow the lead of community leaders and impacted community members to learn more about their health care needs and what should be prioritized.