

2022 AAUW-WA WA Quick Facts on Reproductive Rights

State Laws - Reproductive Health

We need to know a candidate's position on [reproductive rights](#), [abortion access](#), and [hospital mergers](#) so we can make an informed vote in the 2022 General election.¹

Washington state has been a leader in Reproductive Justice¹. "It is the longstanding public policy of this state to promote access to affordable, high quality sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion care, without unnecessary burdens or restrictions on patients or providers."²

Washington state legislature also recognizes that "Although the abortion rights movement has historically centered on women in our advocacy, that must no longer be the case and it is critical that we recognize that transgender, nonbinary, and gender expansive people also get pregnant and require abortion care. Washington's law should reflect the most inclusive understanding of who needs abortions and be updated with gender neutral language."

History of abortion law in WA state

- In 1970 Washington was one of the first states to decriminalize abortion before Roe v. Wade;
- In 1991 the people of Washington passed [Initiative Measure 120](#), the reproductive privacy act, further protecting access to abortion services;
- In 2004 and 2019, respectively, Washington attorneys general Christine Gregoire and Robert W. Ferguson issued opinions clarifying that Washington state law allows certain qualified advanced practice clinicians to provide early in-clinic and medication abortion care and recommended that Washington statutes be updated to provide further clarity;
- In 2018 we passed the Reproductive Parity Act [SB 6219](#) addressing health insurance coverage of reproductive services;³
- In 2019 we passed [Reproductive Health Access for All Act SB 5602](#);
- In 2021 we passed [HB 1009](#) requiring student health plans to cover abortions;⁴
- In 2022 we passed the Access to Abortion Act [HB 1851](#);⁵
- In 2022 Governor Inslee issued a number of directives to further protect abortion rights in our state, including prohibiting state law enforcement cooperation with abortion-related investigations.⁶

See also Seattle Times [The history of abortion rights in Washington state](#) :

¹ See [State Laws Related to Sexual and Reproductive Health](#).

² See our [2022 legislative affirmation of abortion rights](#).

³ Reproductive Parity Act [SB 6219](#) had 21 sponsors, Senate vote 27/22; House vote 50/48. PRO: Legal Voice; National Organization for Women; League of Women Voters; Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii; NARAL Pro-Choice Washington. Lobbying against: Archbishop, Archdiocese of Seattle and Washington State Catholic Conference; Human Life of Washington.

⁴ [HB 1009](#) Requires certain student health plans to provide coverage for the voluntary abortion of a pregnancy.

⁵ Affirm WA Access to Abortion Act – [HB 1851](#). This bill had 20 sponsors; House vote 57/41; Senate vote 28/21; companion Senate bill had 21 sponsors). PRO: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Midwives For Universal Health Care; If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice; Gender Justice League; Washington State Women's Commission; Office of the Washington State Attorney General. Lobbying against: Washington State Catholic Conference; Family Policy Institute of Washington; Human Life of Washington.

⁶ See the [Governor's 22-12 Directive](#).

2022 AAUW-WA WA Quick Facts on Reproductive Rights

Local abortion protections include city resolutions and ordinances. The city of Edmonds passed the [Reproductive Freedom](#) resolution in July 2022. In August 2022 Swedish-Edmonds announced "temporary closure" of the OB/GYN and NICU to be effective in two weeks but back off the move after push back from [local healthcare professionals, elected officials and advocates](#).

While abortion continues to be legal in Washington state, some legislators continue to try to weaken our laws or ban abortions.⁷ Eight bills were introduced to restrict access to abortions. In 2022, prohibiting all abortions by any medication was introduced Reps. Klippert, Young, and Chase. In 2020, medication abortions made up more than half of abortions in the U.S.⁸

Hospital that refuses to provide reproductive services control 40% of the hospital beds in our state.⁹ Even with abortion legal in our state, access to abortion is limited by Catholic Hospital monopoly of healthcare services that prohibit reproductive services.¹⁰

Hospital mergers can negatively impact cost, quality, and access to necessary health care services, including reproductive, end-of-life and gender-affirming care. In 2022 AAUW-WA supported [SB5699/ HB1809](#) that would require public oversight of health entity consolidations and require consolidations improve rather than harm communities' access to affordable quality care. We know this is an issue for women rights and LGBTQ+ rights across our state.

Misinformation about abortion, pregnancy services, and abortion services access continues to be a major concern at a patient level as well as a community and political level.ⁱⁱ One key advocacy message is correcting misinformation about legal access to abortion and medical misinformation that is circulating in the media – abortion is still legal in many states including Washington. Crisis Pregnancy Centers are another concern in terms of misinformation.ⁱⁱⁱ Stop Anti-Abortion Disinformation ActS was introduced in Congress in June 2022.¹¹

Some state Attorney Generals have issued public warnings about crisis pregnancy centers (CPC):

WARNING: CPCs do NOT provide comprehensive reproductive healthcare. CPCs are organizations that seek to prevent people from accessing abortion care.¹²

⁷ Eight bills were introduced in 2021-2022 to restrict abortions in our state. See [BillTrack50 2021-2022 Abortion Scorecard](#).

⁸ According to [the Guttmacher Institute](#), advocates expect medication abortions to become a target of new state laws. In South Dakota, a law that bans abortions by telemedicine took effect July 1.

⁹ Seattle Times <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/even-in-liberal-wa-the-catholic-church-has-too-much-influence-on-abortion-access/>

¹⁰ Mergers and acquisitions between health care entities like hospitals, hospital systems, and provider organizations are prolific across the country and in Washington State. These consolidations have been shown to negatively impact cost, quality, and access to necessary health care services. Yet in Washington, these health entity consolidations receive minimal oversight, allowing large health care systems to dictate patients' access to care, including reproductive, end-of-life, and gender-affirming care. See [KOCA Coalition](#).

¹¹ <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-maloney-bonamici-menendez-introduce-legislation-to-stop-anti-abortion-disinformation-by-crisis-pregnancy-centers>

¹² MA AG Warning July 2022. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/crisis-pregnancy-centers-cpcs>. There are nearly 30 crisis pregnancy centers in Massachusetts and more than 2,500 across the U.S., where they outnumber abortion clinics 3 to 1. Much of their funding comes from taxpayers: A dozen states have allocated nearly \$90 million to crisis pregnancy centers this fiscal year, the Associated Press found.

2022 AAUW-WA WA Quick Facts on Reproductive Rights

Advocates are calling on states to stop deceptive pregnancy practices.^{iv} Legal Voices provides a good fact sheet: [Why you should avoid crisis pregnancy centers](#).

- **They are deceptive and misleading:** Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) are set up to look like real clinics. Many are located next to real reproductive health clinics, and target low-income and communities of color. They may offer free pregnancy testing, but then refuse to give you the written test results. And they never give referrals to abortion providers.
- **Health concerns:** They rarely offer complete, medically accurate information. They may offer ultrasounds (sonogram), but may not be trained to use the machine properly, and most do not have medical professional on staff to look at the results. This could be very dangerous if they say your ultrasound results are fine when in fact there is something seriously wrong.
- **Privacy risks:** With Roe v. Wade overturned, abortion is or will soon be illegal in many states. Unlike real medical clinics, CPCs do not have to keep your personal information confidential. The personal information gathered by CPCs could be used as evidence in civil or criminal cases against people who get abortions, those who help them, and healthcare providers.

See Legal Voices: [Know Your Rights: Abortion in Washington State](#) and [Know Your Rights: Birth Control in Washington State](#).

Abortion Question: What legislation would you support, or oppose, regarding access to abortion? Please explain.

Hospital merger question: How concerned are you about a Catholic Health Care System owning 40% of the hospital beds in our state, and the impact it has on access, quality and cost of care in your district.

Misinformation about Abortion Question: What legislation would you support or oppose to protect healthcare consumers from deceptive practices or lack of transparency in services offered? For example, crisis pregnancy centers that falsely advertise as if they provide abortion services.

Federal Question: The Stop Anti-Abortion Disinformation Act was introduced recently to address the concern about false abortion information and deceptive practices by Crisis Pregnancy Centers. What legislation would you support, or oppose regarding regulating Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Do you think they should receive federal and/or state funding?

See AAUW National: [Where We Stand on Reproductive Rights 2021](#).

ⁱ Protecting access to abortion care is a priority for AAUW. See [Where We Stand on Reproductive Rights](#).

ⁱⁱ Legal Voices <https://www.legalvoice.org/abortion-rights-washington>

ⁱⁱⁱ Crisis Pregnancy Centers and misinformation. <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/blog/what-are-crisis-pregnancy-centers>

^{iv} Op-ed: Only states can stop antiabortion 'crisis pregnancy centers' from deceiving consumers <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-06-22/crisis-pregnancy-centers-abortion-deception-regulation>