

Good Morning,

My name is Signe Espinoza and I am the Executive Director at Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates.

*Thank yous to the members and the committee.*

Today, I am testifying on behalf of our affiliates who serve over 90,000 patients across the commonwealth each year. For all the people tuning in today, I want to make clear that our three affiliates: Planned Parenthood Southeastern PA, Planned Parenthood Keystone, and Planned Parenthood Western's doors are open.

I am also coming to you as someone who has had an abortion and is starting a family very soon. I bring this up for a couple of reasons:

1. Because we are living in times where the reality is: the first time I got pregnant, I chose the safest option that was best for me, abortion and;
2. Because at Planned Parenthood, we believe that people most impacted by abortion restrictions and restrictive policies should be a part of these conversations—and it is something we don't often see within our legislative processes.

When anti-abortion legislators amended SB 106 to include an anti-abortion constitutional amendment, it was in the middle of the night and behind our backs—without dialogue from advocates, providers, or patients. The outcome has left many of us outraged as the process for amending our state constitution is being used to threaten our most basic and fundamental rights: like health care. Right now, we are confronting the fight for our lives.

Although abortion remains legal in the state of Pennsylvania, the fall of Roe has still impacted Planned Parenthood health centers and our patients. Even before the Supreme Court issued its decision in June, Planned Parenthood Health centers and patients faced barriers to accessing care. Providers and patients continue to navigate onerous, outdated, and unnecessary requirements and restrictions on abortion care imposed by the state legislature and are regularly met with harassment and judgement from protesters who show up at Planned Parenthood clinics. These challenges have been exacerbated by the fall of Roe.

Since the decision was issued in *Dobbs*, we have seen more aggressive and emboldened protesters harassing patients and patient staff at our health centers in this state, and we fear that these conditions could only get worse.

Additionally, some Planned Parenthood health centers in the state are experiencing a surge of patients from outside of our borders. Our staff is not only caring for our neighbors, but for people traveling from Ohio and other surrounding states. This increase in out-of-state patients has forced some clinics to book appointments 3-4 weeks out—meaning that those who need care are being forced to wait longer than usual. For some patients, abortion is not only a life saving procedure but a time-sensitive one. Our staff continues to do all they can to ensure that patients get the care they need, when they need it. We have already seen that in this post-*Roe* reality, it is critically important that abortion remain accessible not just for Pennsylvanians, but for those coming to our state in search of compassionate care.

Unfortunately, anti-abortion politicians in this state are working hard to challenge our efforts to ensure that abortion remains protected and available in Pennsylvania. Right now, 85% of counties in the commonwealth do not have abortion providers, and we have only 17 clinics left. We need to do everything we can to ensure that we are able to create a Pennsylvania where every single person has access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care and is able to do so without fear of violence and without having to navigate a regulatory obstacle course to receive basic health care. Instead, we remain one of the few access states with certain restrictive, medically unnecessary pre-abortion requirements, including requiring lab work before medication abortion, which is a barrier to care and not supported by experts in the field. We need a Pennsylvania that repeals existing restrictions and passes bills to protect and expand access to care, supports clinics and patients administratively and financially, and protects families so that they can thrive.

Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates and affiliates are always open to speaking with members about our work, and the ways we can work together to protect and expand access.