

Project 2025's abortion bans and the Trump-Vance plan to undercut workers and families' economic rights

by Hilary Wething and Katherine DeCourcy

The Supreme Court's overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 has led millions of women across the country to experience a loss of economic security, independence, and mobility by taking away their control over when to have a child. The Trump-Vance administration wants to continue this trend by restricting the contraceptive resources available to women and banning abortion altogether.

The Trump-Vance campaign claims to be restricting abortion and reproductive healthcare in service of family values. But this restriction of working women's freedom and opportunity fits seamlessly with the wider Republican agenda to disempower *all* workers and their families.

Access to abortion is on the ballot and under attack

Since the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, access to abortion has come under attack in the United States.

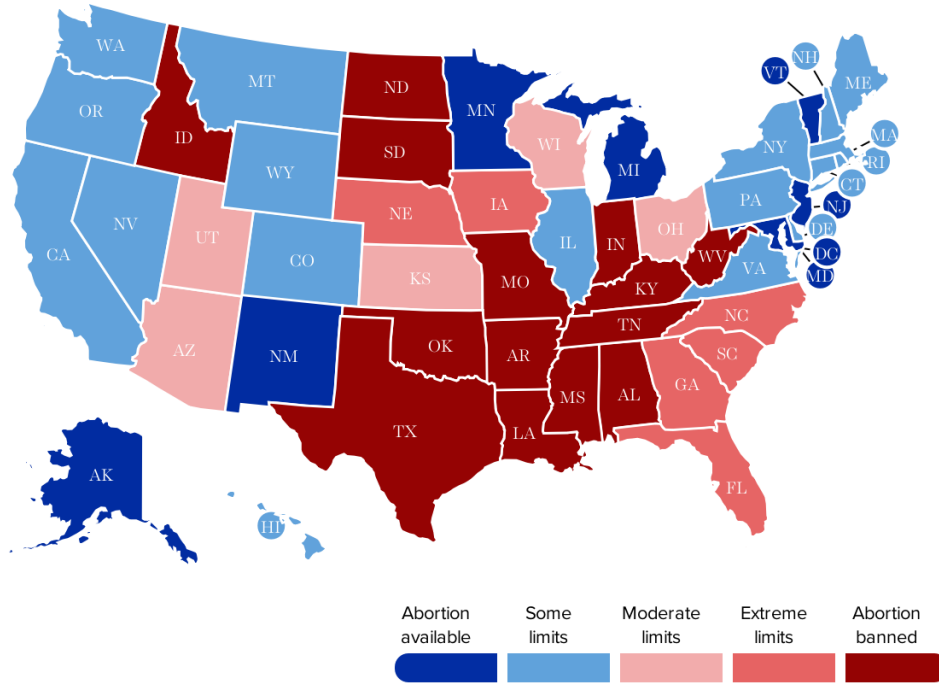
[Figure A](#) shows that 25 states have abortion restrictions, ranging from limiting abortion at 15-22 weeks to full abortion bans.

The map shows that these bans are overwhelmingly happening in Southern states. And because Southern states are home to the highest share of Black people, current state abortion restrictions fall more heavily on Black women. The resulting restriction of Black women's economic opportunities and freedoms will exacerbate existing racial disparities.

Figure A

Moderate to severe abortion restrictions exist in 25 states following overturn of Roe v. Wade

State policies on abortion, August 2024



Notes: Darkest red states indicate that abortion is banned, red states indicate that abortion is limited after 6-12 weeks; lightest red states indicate that abortion is limited after 15-22 weeks, light blue states indicate that abortion is limited at or near viability, and dark blue states indicate that abortion is fully protected.

Source: Adapted from Kaiser Family Foundation, "Abortion in the United States Dashboard," updated August 28, 2024.

Not only would these state-level bans be upheld under a Trump-Vance presidency, but both Trump and Vance have made recent statements in support of a national-level abortion ban. The ultra-conservative plan tied to the Trump-Vance presidency--Project 2025---encourages the next president to "[enact the most robust protections for the unborn](#) that Congress will support while deploying existing federal powers to protect innocent life and vigorously complying with statutory bans on the federal funding of abortion." Among other polices, Project 2025 describes a [policy agenda](#) of:

- banning abortion medication;
- limiting contraceptive access; and
- forcing states to report miscarriages and abortions to the federal government.

Abortion and reproductive care are economic issues

Abortion bans and policies that reduce access to reproductive care are attacks on women's reproductive freedoms, which translate into attacks on women's economic freedoms. Access to abortion allows women to choose if and when they want to have

children, inevitably affecting women's economic outcomes. This ability to choose the timing of fertility and childbearing allows women the opportunity invest more in their education or their skills and ambitions in the workplace. These choices can lead to higher pay, greater attachment to the labor market during and after a pregnancy, and greater economic security for their family if and when they do choose to have a child. Over the last 40 years, working women have made huge contributions to family income: Research has shown that absent women's hours and earnings, low- and middle- income families would have seen steep drops in their income. Women's contributions lessened the blow to low-income families and [increased income in middle-income families over the period by 12.4%](#).

Abortion bans work hand in hand with other economic policies--like low minimum wages and lack of healthcare--to impoverish workers and their families

When abortion access is taken away, women lose the ability to decide if and when they have a child, and in that loss, they lose the freedom to invest in themselves and their career in a way that aligns with their family needs and financial goals. This is particularly true for Black women: Research has found that Black teen girls [living in states with TRAP?TRAP laws, or targeted restrictions on abortion provider laws, are policies that regulate abortion providers, effectively limiting contraception, abortion access, and abortion laws experienced an increase in teen births and were less likely to initiate and complete college.](#)

Loss of control over the timing of their fertility and childbearing often means women have children earlier than intended, which further reduces the resources available to support additional family members and can lead to instances of economic insecurity. [A study comparing women who were denied abortions to women who got an abortion of similar gestational ages paints a bleak picture:](#) Women denied abortions were less likely to be employed full time and more likely to receive public assistance in the six months after being denied an abortion. And four years after being denied abortions, these women were more likely to be in poverty.

The wider effort to threaten economic security of working families

This attack on the freedom and opportunity of working women is not an outlier in the agenda of Trump-Vance and Project 2025, but instead one piece in the wider Republican effort to disempower and limit opportunities for all workers. Abortion rights are most restricted in places where broader supports for workers and families are similarly weakened.

In the 25 states with abortion limits or bans, workers and families across the board have their opportunities and freedoms restricted. For example, the states with abortion restrictions have substantially lower legal minimum wages; are more likely to be in a state that thwarts union formation; and are far less likely to have expanded Medicaid, which provides health coverage to poor families. Along with abortion service denial, these policies work together to economically disempower workers and families.

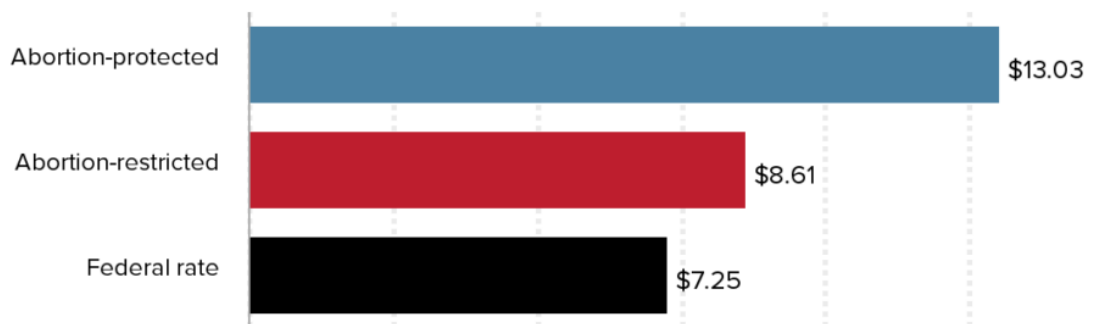
States with abortion restrictions have lower minimum wages

Lack of access to reproductive care strips bodily autonomy from millions of women, while low minimum wages cause those same workers and families to struggle to cover the costs of raising a family. [Figure B](#) shows that minimum wage workers in states with abortion restrictions or bans earn \$4.42 per hour *less* than their counterparts in states with abortion protections. This wage gap amounts to \$9,194 annually for a full-time, year-round, hourly-paid worker.

Figure B

States with abortion protections have, on average, higher minimum wages than abortion-restricted states and the U.S. as a whole

Average minimum wage in states categorized by abortion policy



Notes: States are split into two categories: abortion-restricted and abortion-protected. The “abortion-restricted” category includes the three sub-categories from Figure A: states with moderate and extreme limits, and states where abortion is completely banned. The “abortion-protected” states include states where abortion is available or has some limits. D.C. is included in the “abortion-protected” states.

Source: EPI, “[Minimum Wage Tracker](#),” updated July 1, 2024, Kaiser Family Foundation, “[Abortion in the United States Dashboard](#),” updated August 28, 2024.

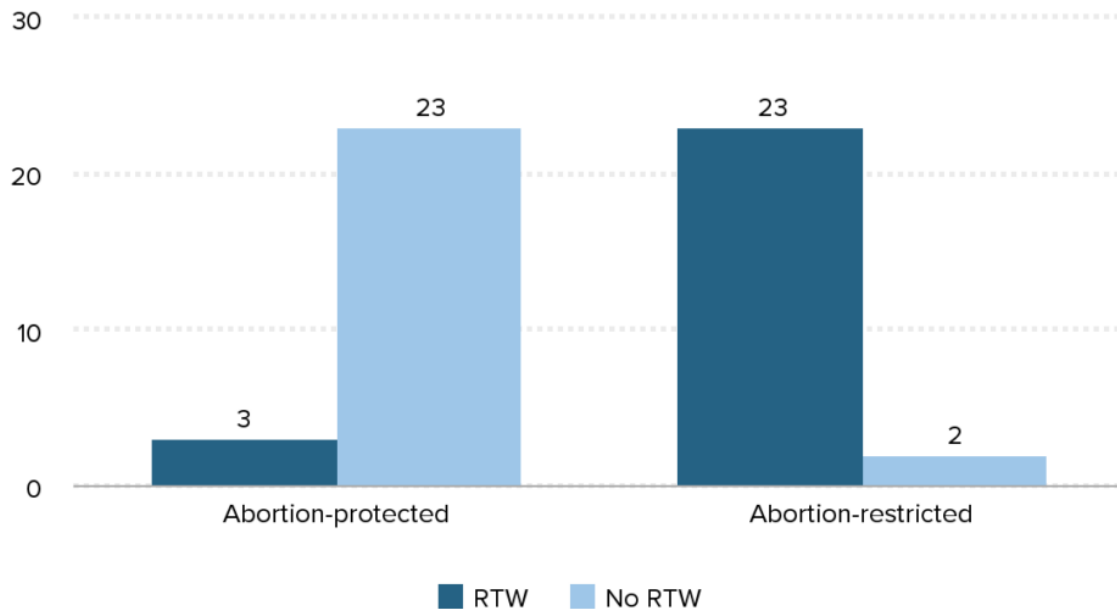
States with abortion restrictions are more likely to be "right-to-work" states

Abortion bans are also much more prevalent in states that don't protect collective bargaining rights. [Figure C](#) shows that 23 of the 25 states with moderate or severe abortion restrictions or bans are states with "right-to-work laws that make it harder for workers to form unions. Workers in unions have higher wages, better benefits---like health insurance and retirement plans---and better workplace practices, like predictable schedules. By striking down the ability to form a union, workers are subject to worse pay and benefits---and workplace standards that may not support having a family.

Figure C

The vast majority of states that have right-to-work laws are abortion restricted

Number of states with right-to-work laws by abortion policy status



Notes: States are split into two categories: abortion-restricted and abortion-protected. The "abortion-restricted" category includes the three sub-categories from Figure A: states with moderate and extreme limits, and states where abortion is completely banned. The "abortion-protected" states include states where abortion is available or has some limits. D.C. is included in the "abortion-protected" states.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, "[Right-to-Work States](#)," updated 2017, Kaiser Family Foundation, "[Abortion in the United States Dashboard](#)," updated December 19, 2023.

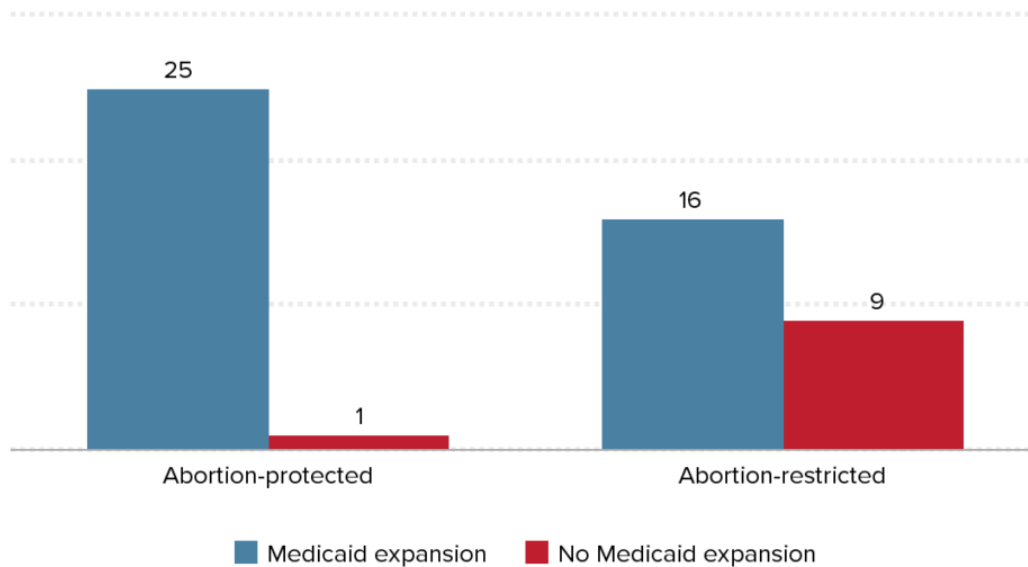
States with abortion restrictions less likely to have Medicaid coverage

Medicaid expansion is a lifeline for economically vulnerable workers, as it provides health care coverage to low-income adults who otherwise might not have access to it. Health care coverage is particularly important for reproductive health because pregnancies require frequent medical appointments and care to ensure the health of mother and baby during the pregnancy. [Figure D](#) shows that nearly every state with abortion protections or late term restrictions has also expanded Medicaid. However, nine of the 10 states that haven't expanded Medicaid are states with an abortion ban or moderate to severe restrictions. In these 9 states, low-income women are robbed of the freedom to decide whether and when to have children and lack access to medical care to support the health of both mother and child.

Figure D

Nearly every abortion-protected state has expanded Medicaid

Number of states that have expanded Medicaid by abortion policy status



Notes: States are split into two categories: abortion-restricted and abortion-protected. The “abortion-restricted” category includes the three sub-categories from Figure A: states with moderate and extreme limits, and states where abortion is completely banned. The “abortion-protected” states include states where abortion is available or has some limits. D.C. is included in the “abortion-protected” states.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, “[Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions](#)” (interactive map), updated May 8, 2024, Kaiser Family Foundation, “[Abortion in the United States Dashboard](#),” updated August 28, 2024.

The refusal of states to expand Medicaid coverage in the past decade is an intentional outcome of state policy design under a conservative government. Despite the federal government having nearly-full Medicaid funding and coverage allocated, states still choose not to take it---leaving millions without health insurance coverage.

Conclusion

As states that have already banned abortion show, abortion bans work hand in hand with other economic policies--like low minimum wages and lack of health care--to impoverish workers and their families. These intentional policy choices simultaneously strip women of their right to choose if and when to start a family; the financial resources to adequately support children or a family; and access to health insurance coverage, enabling them to be healthy and keep medical costs low during their reproductive year.

Note: The figures in this report largely update a report (<https://www.epi.org/publication/economics-of-abortion-bans>) and blog post (<https://www.epi.org/blog/abortion-rights>) written by Asha Banerjee at Economic Policy Institute.