



SENATOR JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ
DISTRICT 29

PRESS RELEASE



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Senator Rodríguez's Statement on the "People's Lawsuit"

El Paso - State Sen. José Rodríguez's issued the following statement on the lawsuit challenging a host of long-standing and burdensome Texas laws that restrict access to abortion care, which was filed in federal court by Whole Woman's Health Alliance, the Afiya Center, Fund Texas Choice, Lilith Fund, Texas Equal Access Fund, West Fund, and Dr. Bhavik Kumar:

Roe v. Wade established access to safe and legal abortion as a constitutional right in 1973, and, in 2016, that decision was reinforced in Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt, which held that a woman should be able to get safe abortion care without undue burdens.

Even after the latest U.S. Supreme Court's ruling just two years ago, the conservative majority in the Texas Legislature has passed numerous laws that have created medically unnecessary burdens on women and health care providers as well as promoted the dissemination of medically inaccurate and false information to make it difficult, if not impossible, for Texas women to access abortion. These are all thinly veiled efforts to disenfranchise women from exercising their constitutional right to bodily autonomy and choice.

When politicians place restrictions on abortion coverage, they put Texans' health and safety at risk by taking away a person's ability to make the health decisions that are best for their circumstances and access safe care. These restrictions jeopardize Texans' health and disproportionately impact low-income Texans, immigrants, people of color, young people, and people in rural communities, thereby blocking their access to health care. As shown in the recent Turnaway Study conducted by University of California San Francisco, when a women seeks an abortion, but is denied one, she is more likely to fall into poverty, endangering herself, and potentially her newborn baby. In Texas, 1.2 million women earn less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level and are in need of publicly funded family planning services.

As recent reports show, when the state politicizes the delivery of health care, Texans lose access to care.

The lawsuit challenges the constitutional validity of the following Texas laws:

- Targeted regulation of abortion provider (TRAP) laws, which single out abortion providers for regulatory requirements that are different and more burdensome than those governing other healthcare providers;
- Laws that deny abortion patients the benefits of scientific progress, including those that limit advancements in the use of medication abortion and those that prohibit the use of telemedicine in abortion care;
- Restrictions that shame and punish those seeking abortion, forcing patients to delay care and forcing doctors to lie to patients and to provide state-mandated information about abortion that is biased, misleading, or medically inaccurate;
- Forced parental involvement laws that require minors to obtain approval from a parent or judge and navigate a labyrinth of procedural requirements before having an abortion, including in cases where the minor's parents are estranged, deceased, negligent, or abusive; and
- Laws that threaten abortion providers with arrest or jail for providing care subject abortion providers to special criminal liability.

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation; Veteran Affairs and Border Security; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair).