



THE DIVIDED STATES OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Population Institute's Annual Report Card Lowers U.S. Grade to an "F"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Population Institute released its eighth annual *50 State Report Card on Reproductive Health and Rights* today. The report card, the most comprehensive of its kind, tracks multiple indicators of reproductive health and rights, including access to family planning, sex education, and abortion services. The findings are not encouraging for the U.S. as a whole.

Reflecting the escalating toll inflicted by the Trump administration and its allies, the U.S. grade for 2019 was lowered to an 'F' from the 'D-' awarded in 2018. There were many federal setbacks in 2019, most notably, the finalization of a new set of rules for Title X, the 50-year old federal-state partnership that supports family planning clinics serving low-income households. Frequently referred to as the "domestic gag rule," the new rules prohibit Title X family planning physicians and staff from counseling patients on abortion or referring them to abortion providers. In response to the new regulations, Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers dropped out of the program.

At the state level there is a deep divide between the states that are promoting reproductive health and rights and those restricting access. This year 21 states receiving a failing grade. Several of the states receiving failing grades have passed abortion restrictions that defy the *Roe v. Wade* guidelines in hopes of persuading the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the landmark ruling.

The Institute's president Robert Walker said, "The political war over reproductive health rights is far from over, but the legal and regulatory battle lines have been drawn, and the stakes could not be higher. If the opponents of reproductive health and rights abortion, contraception, and other reproductive health services, basic health care, will be pushed even further out of reach for low income individuals."

STATE GRADES

Seven states (California, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington) received an "A" in this year's report. The 20 states receiving a failing grade included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin.

THE NATIONAL GRADE

For the first year in the 8-year history of our report card, the U.S., as a whole, received an 'F'. Several factors account for the lower grade, most notably:

Title X

Title X clinics provide family planning and reproductive health care services to 4 million people a year, but the adoption of the "domestic gag rule" jeopardizes the integrity and future of the program. Several states and providers, including Planned Parenthood, have opted out rather than abide by the new restrictions. As traditional and trusted family providers drop out, the Trump administration is awarding Title X grants to "crisis pregnancy centers" run by staunch anti-abortion advocates, some of whom do not even provide contraceptive services to clients.

For a copy of the report, including a state-by-state breakdown, visit the Population Institute's website www.populationinstitute.org/reportcard
For questions about the report, call Jennie Wetter, Director of Public Policy, at (202) 544-3300, ext. 108.

A special thanks to the Guttmacher Institute whose research made this report card possible.





Federal Courts

In addition to the appointments of Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Senate has confirmed dozens of Trump-nominated judges to the lower courts, raising concerns that the federal courts will curb access to reproductive health care. In addition to restricting abortion rights, a more conservative federal judiciary may issue adverse rulings affecting Title X, the coverage of contraception under the Affordable Care Act and LGBTQ protections.

Sex Education

The Trump administration is seeking to slash federal support for comprehensive – and evidence-based – sexuality education curricula that reduce the rate of teen pregnancy. In their place, the administration is promoting “sexual risk avoidance” programs that embrace the failed “abstinence-only” approach backed by conservatives.

LOOKING AHEAD

In releasing this year's 50-State report card, the Institute's director of public policy Jennie Wetter said, “It is imperative we remember those who are the most impacted by our failure to ensure access to safe and affordable reproductive health care. Many people of color and low income individuals are already struggling to access the reproductive health services they need. This report must be a call to action for all those who care about reproductive health and rights.”

METHODOLOGY

Using eleven criteria, the Institute's report card ranked each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia:

- Thirty percent of the grade is based on measures of **effectiveness**. This includes the latest available data on the teenage pregnancy rate (15%) and the rate of unintended pregnancies (15%).
- Twenty-five percent of the grade is based upon **prevention**. This includes mandated comprehensive sex education in the schools (15%), nurses authorized to dispense medications (5%), and minors' access to contraceptive services (5%).
- Twenty-five percent of the grade is based upon **affordability**. This includes if states are expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (15%), Medicaid eligibility rules for family planning (5%), and restrictions of insurance coverage of abortion (5%).
- The final 20 percent of the grade is based upon clinic **access**. This includes abortion restrictions (10%), TRAP Laws (5%), and percent of women living in a county without an abortion provider (5%).

Based upon their scores, each state received a “core” grade (A, B, C, D or F), but some states received an additional “plus” or a “minus” for factors not reflected in the core grade.

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