

# HOW FREE IS FLORIDA?

## Forced Pregnancy is Not Freedom

*Updated September, 2023*

Central to the concept of freedom is the liberty to hold diverse beliefs and make choices based on one's conscience and personal circumstances. Florida's abortion ban is an infringement upon the principles of personal autonomy and denies Floridians the liberty to make choices that are deeply personal and profoundly consequential.

- 67% of Floridians believe abortion should be legal in most or all cases.
- 72% of Americans agree that the decision around ending a pregnancy should belong solely to the pregnant person.
- Only 12% of Floridians want to ban abortion entirely.
- Ohio recently joined five other states with abortion constitutional amendments on the ballot, and seven states including Florida, are gathering petitions for potential amendments. *(see last paragraph)*

The [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), the [American Medical Association](#), the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), and [a list of other health organizations](#) all agree that when access to safe and legal abortion is curtailed, it seriously threatens women's health, access to medical treatment, and the socioeconomic future of entire families. The [World Health Organization](#) states that lack of access to safe, timely, affordable and respectful abortion care is a critical public health and human rights issue.

### Unaware and Out of Luck

Most women don't suspect they're pregnant until five to seven weeks into pregnancy. Florida law requires individuals seeking an abortion to have two in-person appointments with a physician at least 24 hours apart. Minors seeking abortion must obtain parental consent, or petition a judge for a waiver to seek abortion care.

If Florida's six-week ban goes into effect, this gives pregnant individuals one to three weeks to confirm pregnancy, schedule two separate office visits, and decide how a child will affect their relationship, education, career, finances, and housing situation.

Termination of pregnancies resulting from rape or incest would be allowed until fifteen weeks of pregnancy, provided there is documentation such as a restraining order or police report.

According to a 2017 [study](#), one in five U.S. women experience completed or attempted rape in their lifetime. **Due to trauma, societal stigma, and fear of retaliatory attacks by the rapist, it is estimated that only 25% of sexual assaults are reported.**

Victims still recovering both physically and mentally are required to publicly document the intimate details of their violent attack, and only then can they initiate termination of the pregnancy. If documentation is delayed, they are victimized again through forced birth of their attacker's child.

*Forcing victims to give birth to their rapist's child is not freedom.*

### **Targeting Healthcare Workers and Violating Privacy**

The law will require doctors to report abortions performed after the six-week mark to the Florida Department of Health, raising serious patient privacy concerns. Providers could be deterred from performing abortions even when it is medically necessary for fear of being seen to violate reporting requirements.

The Florida Medical Association recently announced a shortage of over 500 obstetrician-gynecologists as physicians are leaving the state in the wake of this law. Recruiters report a sharp rise in reluctance for medical professionals from other states to accept employment in Florida due to the law. Several areas of the state were *already* suffering from a lack of access to women's healthcare.

*Forcing doctors to violate confidentiality is not freedom.*

### **Traveling Hundreds of Miles for Health Care**

If Florida's six-ban is enacted, Virginia (900 miles away) will be the closest state allowing abortions up to fetal viability. North Carolina currently bans abortion at twelve weeks, South Carolina and Georgia have six-week bans in place. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas have total abortion bans with limited exceptions for medical necessity.

Abortion bans overwhelmingly affect lower-income families, who can't afford unexpected travel expenses, multiple days off work, or paying for care for existing children to seek healthcare options. They're also the Floridians most likely to consider ending a pregnancy, due to socio-economic hardship.

*Eradicating safe, medically-supervised reproductive care is not freedom.*

### **Left Out of the Discussion and the Consequences**

"It takes two to Tango," but none of the abortion bans around the country that criminalize women and doctors ever address the man involved in the pregnancy. Additionally, no abortion law addresses the quality of life of the children being forced into families who cannot financially or emotionally support them.

**Freedom Equals Choice. Take Back Your Rights!**