

## THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESTRICTIONS IN FLORIDA

Laws and policies that limit access to reproductive health care have devastating and wide-ranging effects on women's lives, families, and entire communities. These include tangible economic impacts: restricting access to reproductive health care creates barriers to women's pursuit of education and their participation in the workforce. Women's overall earnings suffer as a result, and these restrictions have broader implications for the state's economy and labor force, as well. IWPR estimates show that reproductive health restrictions cost the Florida economy billions of dollars each year.

Prior to the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* to overturn the constitutional right to abortion, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law a 15-week statewide abortion ban, effective July 1, 2022. Governor DeSantis subsequently signed a 6-week ban, passed in April 2023, but the implementation of the 6-week ban is contingent upon the outcome of legal challenges to the 15-week restriction.<sup>1</sup> Although both the 15-week and 6-week bans are sweeping restrictions, gestational age limitations like these are just one policy tool that lawmakers use to restrict abortion access and reproductive rights. Other restrictions on abortion access in Florida include prohibitions on the use of public funds for abortion services and requirements that abortion providers treating minors must first notify the patient's parents and obtain parental consent. There is no mandatory, quality sex education in Florida to promote safe sex practices and informed consent among young people.



**Abortion restrictions in Florida caused an economic loss totaling \$5.7 billion in 2022 alone** (Table 1). Nearly 358,000 more women ages 15-44 could enter the workforce per year in Florida absent these restrictions (Table 1). Removing reproductive rights restrictions would strengthen Florida's economy and local businesses by improving women's participation in the labor force, and therefore their earnings.

### Labor Force Participation and Earnings

IWPR estimates that, in 2022, 15% more women ages 15-44 would have entered the labor force if reproductive restrictions were lifted, compared to 2021 (Table 1). Between 2018 and 2022, if restrictive abortion policies were eliminated, Florida's workforce of women ages 15-44 would have increased by 1 million (Table 1). With fewer barriers to abortion access, more women in Florida would participate in the workforce.

<sup>1</sup> Center for Reproductive Rights, *After Roe Fell: Abortion Laws By State: Florida*, (New York, NY: CRR, 2023) <https://reproductiverights.org/maps/state/florida/>.

As labor force participation among women in this age group declined in Florida, so did earnings. Women ages 15-44 earned \$22.80 less in weekly median earnings in 2022 than they earned in 2021 (Table 1). Restrictions on abortion access and reproductive care are costing women in Florida significant earnings.

**TABLE 1. Florida's Annual Cost of Reproductive Restrictions**

Year	Economic (GDP) Loss (in billions)			Labor Force Loss			Weekly Median Earnings (USD)	
	Women 15-44	Women 45-65	Total	Women 15-44	Women 45-65	Total	Women 15-44	Women 45-65
2018	\$2.61	\$2.24	\$4.85	201,450	153,296	354,746	\$678.7	\$766.8
2019	\$2.67	\$2.24	\$4.91	214,619	152,980	367,599	\$672.6	\$826.2
2020	\$2.66	\$2.19	\$4.84	203,937	143,661	342,102	\$774.8	\$890.7
2021	\$3.00	\$2.53	\$5.53	191,629	150,473	342,102	\$743.2	\$870.2
2022	\$3.18	\$2.57	\$5.74	219,711	166,852	386,563	\$720.4	\$862.3
Total	\$14.11	\$11.76	\$25.87	1,031,346	767,262	1,793,112	-	-
Yearly Average	\$2.82	\$2.35	\$5.17	206,269.2	153,452.3	358,622.4	\$717.94	\$843.24

**Note:** Values in 2022 constant dollars

**Source:** Institute for Women's Policy Research; Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) 2022, compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research

### Comparative Analysis

How does Florida measure up when compared to the rest of the United States? IWPR's 2022 Reproductive Rights Index ranked Florida 22nd in the nation and gave the Sunshine State a C+ grade due to its many restrictions on abortion access and other reproductive rights.<sup>2</sup> On the 2021 IWPR Employment and Earnings Index for the economic standing of women across all 50 states, Florida earned a D+ and ranked 44th on women's labor force participation rate.<sup>3</sup> Florida could better deliver for women—and for all residents of the state—by expanding access to abortion and other reproductive health care.

**Note:** The *Dobbs* decision and Florida's statewide 15-week abortion ban both took effect in July 2022, marking a clear shift toward more stringent reproductive restrictions, therefore the 2022 data uniquely reflect economic data in the context of both *Roe v. Wade* protections as well as a post-*Roe* abortion ban in Florida within the same year. The 6-week abortion ban in Florida has not yet taken effect and is therefore not reflected in the above data.

<sup>2</sup> C. Nicole Mason, Kate Ryan, Olivia Storz, Georgia Povatzis, and Ariane Hegewisch, *IWPR Reproductive Rights Index A State-by-State Analysis and Ranking*, Report, (Washington, DC: IWPR, 2022), <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-reproductive-rights-index-a-state-by-state-analysis-and-ranking/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Elyse Shaw and Halie Mariano, "Before The "She-cession": A Pre-pandemic Snapshot Shows More Women In The Workforce Than Ever;" Brief, IWPR (Washington, DC: IWPR, 2021), <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-Earnings-Index-Brief.pdf>>.