

IWPR #B391
January 2024

UPDATED ANALYSIS OF THE COST OF ABORTION RESTRICTIONS TO STATES

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the number of state-level restrictions on abortion access increases, and in some states, they get more and more extreme. To capture the ongoing harm of these restrictions—not only to women's health but also to the economy—the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) developed a novel model to analyze the impact of state-level abortion restrictions on economic outcomes.

This analysis is an update of the original research done in 2021. The model connects 2020–2022 data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics—specifically, the monthly Current Population Survey—to data from the Guttmacher Institute on the number and type of **restrictions** in each state to estimate the impact of abortion restrictions on states' gross domestic product (GDP). The main difference in this second edition of the research is the inclusion of medication abortion as a category of restriction. During the period of analysis, there was also an increase in the total number of abortion restrictions across categories.

This research is vital, as women make up a significant portion of the labor force and substantially contribute to the economy. **Abortion bans hurt women and families, and they hurt state economies.** When women are not able to work due to restrictions on abortion access, it directly impacts not just individual women but also the broader economies in which they participate.

Please note that this analysis does not include the impact of abortion bans that would have been observed since the *Dobbs* Supreme Court decision in June 2022. The analysis requires a full year of labor and census data, which are not yet available for 2023, when most of the impact would have occurred.

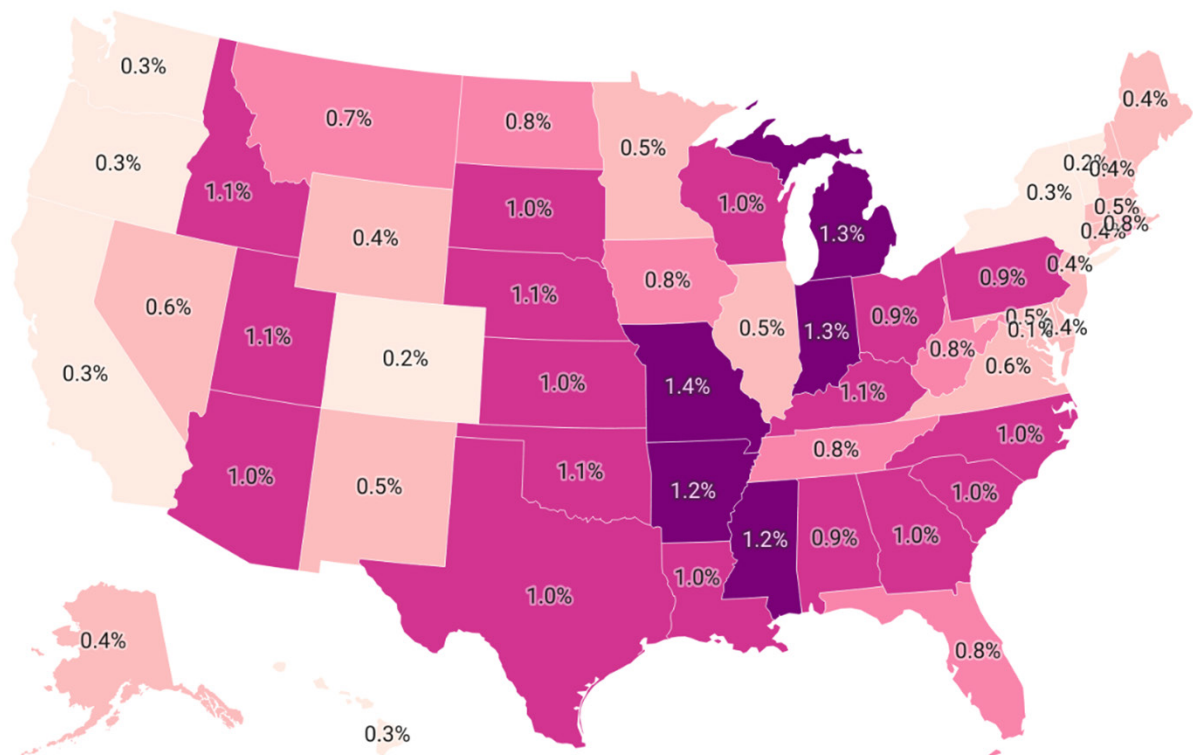


KEY FINDINGS

- IWPR estimates that restrictions placed on abortion access cost the US an average of **\$173 billion** per year by reducing labor force participation and earnings levels and increasing turnover and time off from work among women employed in the private sector. This is up from **\$146 billion** in 2020.
- If reproductive health restrictions were eliminated:
 - Nearly **597,000 more women** would be in the nation's labor force annually.
 - National GDP would be nearly **0.7 percent greater**.
 - Employed women aged 15 to 44 would **earn an additional \$4.3 billion** per year.
- IWPR's estimates show that the more restricted abortion is in a state, the higher the GDP loss is.
 - In 2022, the 10 states with the highest economic loss all have among the *most* restrictive abortion laws in the country: Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Utah. (Michigan is an outlier among these 10 states. Eighteen states have the same legal limit for abortion ("viability"), and none of them experienced an economic loss as high as Michigan's.)
 - The 10 states (including Washington, DC) with the *least* economic loss all have protections in place for abortion access: California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington.

Loss as a % of State GDP

0.1-0.36 0.36-0.62 0.62-0.88 0.88-1.14 1.14-1.4



Source: IWPR estimates using 2020–2022 Current Populations Survey Data (US Bureau of Labor Statistics).

COST OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESTRICTIONS BY STATE

State	Average Annual Economic Loss as a % of State GDP*	Total Average Annual Economic Loss	Average Annual % Labor Force Loss Women 15–44	Total Average Annual Labor Force Loss Women 15–44
Alabama	0.9%	\$2,381,904,951	1.6%	9,608
Alaska	0.4%	\$251,941,285	1.3%	1,197
Arizona	1.0%	\$4,519,289,297	1.7%	16,480
Arkansas	1.2%	\$1,934,189,137	2.0%	7,786
California	0.3%	\$10,934,214,122	0.8%	39,188
Colorado	0.2%	\$1,202,817,459	0.4%	3,632
Connecticut	0.4%	\$1,403,507,109	0.8%	4,065
Delaware	0.4%	\$352,847,713	0.9%	1,252
District of Columbia	0.1%	\$124,781,412	0.2%	226
Florida	0.8%	\$11,143,499,582	1.5%	38,850
Georgia	1.0%	\$7,756,934,100	2.0%	29,545
Hawaii	0.3%	\$311,431,790	0.7%	1,208
Idaho	1.1%	\$1,208,139,811	1.8%	4,715
Illinois	0.5%	\$5,404,904,981	0.8%	13,936
Indiana	1.3%	\$5,751,383,019	1.9%	17,570
Iowa	0.8%	\$1,782,683,983	1.1%	5,230
Kansas	1.0%	\$2,117,037,448	1.6%	6,525
Kentucky	1.1%	\$2,883,170,259	2.0%	11,372
Louisiana	1.0%	\$2,892,193,024	2.1%	12,379
Maine	0.4%	\$349,139,550	0.6%	1,064
Maryland	0.5%	\$2,363,182,649	0.9%	7,608
Massachusetts	0.5%	\$3,351,868,058	0.8%	8,242
Michigan	1.3%	\$8,134,505,377	1.9%	24,722
Minnesota	0.5%	\$2,423,433,112	0.7%	6,114
Mississippi	1.2%	\$1,624,032,006	2.2%	7,793
Missouri	1.4%	\$5,301,556,113	1.9%	15,401
Montana	0.7%	\$485,735,167	0.9%	1,512
Nebraska	1.1%	\$1,807,076,570	1.6%	4,785
Nevada	0.6%	\$1,278,811,331	1.3%	5,173
New Hampshire	0.4%	\$402,422,743	0.6%	1,164
New Jersey	0.4%	\$2,632,003,726	0.6%	7,596
New Mexico	0.5%	\$564,057,452	1.1%	2,648
New York	0.3%	\$5,647,547,105	0.7%	17,527
North Carolina	1.0%	\$7,301,199,945	2.0%	27,778
North Dakota	0.8%	\$592,839,882	1.5%	1,672
Ohio	0.9%	\$7,147,435,525	1.5%	23,109
Oklahoma	1.1%	\$2,667,007,621	2.3%	11,981
Oregon	0.3%	\$826,785,819	0.4%	2,620
Pennsylvania	0.9%	\$8,548,925,192	1.5%	25,766
Rhode Island	0.8%	\$572,506,535	0.9%	1,516
South Carolina	1.0%	\$2,995,847,675	1.8%	11,505
South Dakota	1.0%	\$671,354,489	1.5%	1,897

COST OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESTRICTIONS BY STATE

State	Average Annual Economic Loss as a % of State GDP*	Total Average Annual Economic Loss	Average Annual % Labor Force Loss Women 15–44	Total Average Annual Labor Force Loss Women 15–44
Tennessee	0.8%	\$3,809,082,532	1.4%	13,463
Texas	1.0%	\$23,002,230,902	2.3%	93,244
Utah	1.1%	\$2,631,931,918	2.1%	10,636
Vermont	0.2%	\$62,854,531	0.2%	179
Virginia	0.6%	\$4,086,077,720	1.1%	13,386
Washington	0.3%	\$2,293,473,626	0.7%	7,295
West Virginia	0.8%	\$755,375,307	1.5%	3,115
Wisconsin	1.0%	\$4,029,758,559	1.3%	10,884
Wyoming	0.4%	\$187,282,122	1.2%	909
National	0.7%	\$172,904,211,339	1.4%	597,068

Source: IWPR estimates using 2020–2022 Current Populations Survey Data (US Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Notes: The number of restrictions by state are based on Guttmacher Institute’s “Overview of Abortion Laws” (May 2023). All values are reported in 2022 constant prices.

*Annual Average Loss between 2020–2022 as a percentage of 2022 GDP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis underscores the incredible harm and destructive power of abortion restrictions—both on women’s lives and entire communities. The impacts of the restrictions are complicated and multi-faceted, yet the solutions are often relatively straightforward. Among other policy options, states should end abortion restrictions and pursue legislative options to protect the right to abortion. They should work to make abortion easier to access, including by improving financial accessibility through state Medicaid coverage and by overturning the Hyde Amendment, which limits the use of federal dollars for abortion services.

States should also take steps to ensure that patients seeking reproductive care have access to accurate and timely information, including by ending public funding or tax credits for Crisis Pregnancy Centers that work to prevent women from accessing abortion. States can further consider options to enshrine protections for reproductive health care and abortion access in state constitutions.

This brief was prepared by Christine Clark, Martha Susana Jaimes, and Emme Rogers. It was made possible with support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.