

## The Economic Impacts of Reproductive Restrictions in Florida

Restrictions on reproductive health, like the gestational abortion ban implemented in Florida, have devastating and far-reaching impacts on the health and well-being of women. Furthermore, reproductive restrictions create barriers to women's pursuit of education and their participation in the labor force, therefore inflicting adverse financial repercussions on women, families, and the entire state economy.

The 15-week abortion ban in Florida that was in effect throughout 2023 is no exception. IWPR estimates that reproductive health restrictions cost the Florida economy \$14 billion in 2023.<sup>1</sup> This estimate builds upon the work highlighted in the State Policy at a Glance report published by IWPR on October 18, 2023, which discussed the serious and negative impacts on Florida's economy of reproductive health restrictions over the past five years.<sup>2</sup>

Triggered by the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law a 15-week statewide abortion ban, effective July 1, 2022. He subsequently signed a stricter ban, passed in April 2023, but the implementation of this six-week ban had been contingent upon the outcome of legal challenges to the 15-week restriction and, therefore, did not take effect until May 1, 2024.<sup>3</sup>

Sweeping restrictions like the gestational age limitations passed by the Florida state legislature are just one policy tool that lawmakers use to restrict abortion access and reproductive rights. Other restrictions 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.<sup>4</sup>

When compared to other states, Florida's economy experienced one of the greatest financial losses related to reproductive restrictions, totaling \$14 billion in 2023. According to economic analysis conducted by IWPR, 1.5 percent more women of reproductive age (15–44) would have entered the Florida labor force in 2023 absent the legal restrictions that limited abortion access.<sup>5</sup> As high as these estimated costs already are, IWPR reasonably projects that these numbers will only increase in 2024 due to the implementation of a stricter six-week abortion ban.

### Comparative Analysis

Florida is one of 16 states that ban or severely restrict abortion access, and those states are seeing similarly devastating and wide-ranging impacts, including economic harm. In 2023, Florida experienced some of the greatest economic losses related to reproductive restrictions nationwide, second only to Texas in total dollars lost.<sup>6</sup>

Reproductive health restrictions threaten the economic security of women and families, but they also reduce the economic competitiveness of states within the national economy. Collectively, Florida and the 15 states with severe restrictions on abortion access cost the national economy \$68 billion annually.<sup>7</sup> This estimate accounts for states that have taken legislative action to expand and protect abortion access, thus offsetting the adverse economic impacts that abortion bans like the one in Florida are contributing to the national economy. The total loss to the national economy would be \$45 billion greater if it weren't for those proactive states that have expanded and protected abortion access. Lifting restrictions on reproductive health care and expanding abortion access in Florida would economically benefit women within its borders, as well as the broader state and national economies.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, "2024 Analysis Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions," (Washington, DC: IWPR, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/2024-analysis-costs-of-reproductive-health-restrictions/>.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Economic Impacts of Reproductive Health Restrictions in Florida," Brief, IWPR (Washington, DC: IWPR, 2023) <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/The-Economic-Impacts-of-Reproductive-Restrictions-in-Florida-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Nick Robertson, "Florida's abortion law will change: Here's when," (Washington, DC: *The Hill*, 2024), <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/4568593-floridas-abortion-law-will-change-heres-when/>.

<sup>4</sup> IWPR, "2024 Analysis Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions."

<sup>5</sup> IWPR, "2024 Analysis Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions."

<sup>6</sup> IWPR, "2024 Analysis Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions."

<sup>7</sup> IWPR, "2024 Analysis Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions."