

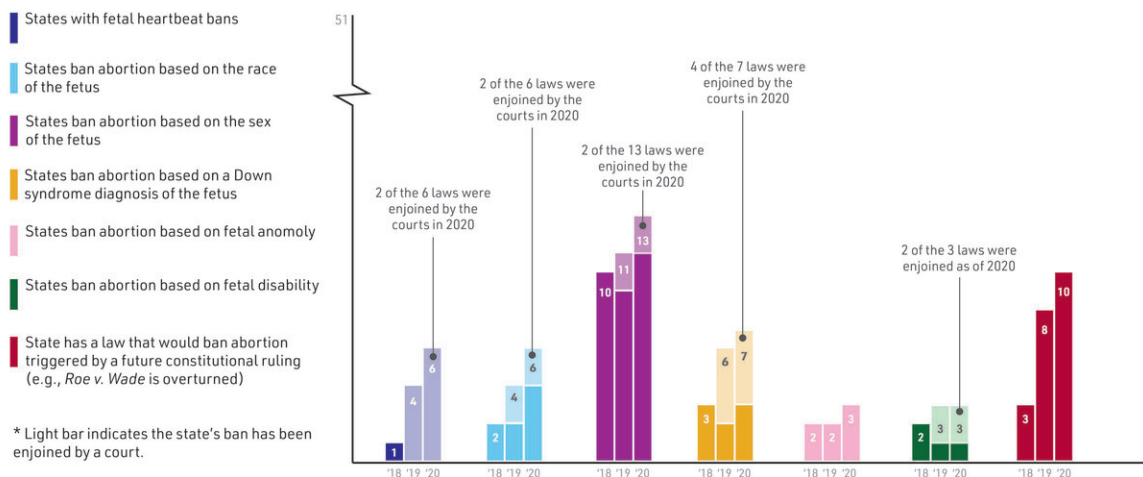
Updated abortion law data show continued litigation and increased legal restrictions despite ongoing pandemic

October 2 2020

STATE ABORTION BANS

DEC. 1, 2018 – AUG. 31, 2020

The State Abortion Bans dataset captured by the Center for Public Health Law Research's Policy Surveillance Program tracks statutes, regulations, case law, and attorneys general opinions where a state-wide abortion ban law was in effect or a court decision has enjoined all or part of that law between December 1, 2018 and August 31, 2020. Learn more at LawAtlas.org/datasets/abortion-bans.



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In a year marked by the global COVID-19 pandemic, US states and courts continued to enact and uphold increased restrictions on abortion and access to reproductive health care, according to updated data published today by the Temple University Center for Public Health Law Research.

The updated data, which are available on LawAtlas.org, capture amendments to existing laws, or newly enacted laws passed by legislators in effect as of August 31, 2020, as well as court decisions and attorneys general opinions affecting the implementation of [abortion](#)-related laws.

The data cover 15 types of abortion regulations, and show few states moving to improve access to care—instead many are strengthening existing barriers or erecting new ones:

- The data now capture a growing effort by states to pass laws that would ban most abortions upon a future constitutional ruling, such as a potential Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. These "trigger bans" currently exist in 10 states.
- Nine states now have laws that require [abortion providers](#) to counsel patients based on an unverified claim that medication abortion could be reversed.
- Mississippi and Tennessee both added "reason-based" bans during this update period, increasing the total to 15 states that have laws banning abortion on the basis of fetal anomaly, race, sex, gender, or a Down syndrome diagnosis.

"Policymakers have once again shown their willingness to create unnecessary hurdles to accessing essential abortion care and endangering [public health](#), in spite of an ongoing pandemic. Given the current political climate, it is even more concerning that the courts have largely left abortion access up to individual states, exacerbating regional, racial, and socioeconomic disparities," said Adrienne Ghorashi, Esq., a program

manager at the Center for Public Health Law Research, and lead researcher on the Abortion Law Project.

Virginia is one notable example where legislators removed legal barriers to abortion access: The state had a sweeping repeal of abortion restrictions under the Reproductive Health Protection Act, including its 24-hour waiting period, ultrasound and counseling requirements, physician-only laws for medication and first trimester abortions, abortion facility licensing laws, and reporting requirements for providers.

These data were created by the Policy Surveillance Program at the Center for Public Health Law Research in collaboration with subject matter experts from Resources for Abortion Delivery (RAD), Guttmacher Institute, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), National Abortion Federation (NAF), and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), who conceptualized and developed the Abortion Law Project.

More information: Temple University Center for Public Health Law Research, Policy Surveillance Program. State Abortion Laws. lawatlas.org/datasets/abortion-laws

Provided by Temple University Center for Public Health Law Research

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