

Post-Roe Ohio Activist Toolkit:  
**Abortion Advocacy In  
Your Local Community**



Fall 2022

# Table of Contents:

I. Background .....	1
II. Advocate for Abortion Access in Your Community .....	2
III. Follow the Money .....	5
IV. Vote Your Values .....	6
V. Resources .....	6

## I. Background

[Despite a majority of Ohioans \(82%\) supporting some form of abortion access](#), extremist politicians have committed themselves to stripping people of reproductive freedom. After the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the federal right to abortion, Ohio’s draconian abortion ban Senate Bill 23 went into effect. That made abortions after approximately six weeks of pregnancy illegal. Reproductive freedom organizations immediately challenged this ban in state court. On September 14, 2022, a lower court **temporarily** blocked enforcement of S.B. 23 and restored abortion access through 22 weeks into pregnancy, at least through October 12. A preliminary injunction hearing is set for October 7. Ohio abortion providers will continue to provide updates on the lawsuit as it progresses; but for now, abortion is legal in Ohio! Together, we can permanently stop the bans.

Although abortion access is **temporarily** restored, the fight for reproductive freedom is far from over. Anti-abortion politicians have been trying to strip away our rights to reproductive healthcare for decades. Without the federal protections of *Roe v. Wade*, state officials and other elected leaders hold tremendous power to ensure and support access to this essential healthcare. In this toolkit, you’ll find several ways to put your passion for reproductive freedom into tangible action by engaging with leaders in your community. Each step helps us build the power needed to win back our right to bodily autonomy, for good. **People are powerful when we work together.**

For a comprehensive look into the current legal battle against S.B. 23, as well as all active reproductive freedom lawsuits in Ohio, visit: [Legal Landscape of Abortion in Ohio](#).

The [ACLU of Ohio](#) and [Pro-Choice Ohio](#) are deeply committed to this fight. Visit both sites for more information on their work and unique ways to plug into upcoming opportunities!

## II. Advocate For Abortion Access In Your Community

**Please note:** This toolkit is intended for pro-abortion community members seeking to make an impact in their communities. The actions listed below won't provide universal protection because Ohio's Attorney General has jurisdiction over the entire state and can still prosecute.

The decisions of local prosecutors, city councils, mayors, and other local leadership to not waste resources on investigating and/or charging people and instead taking proactive steps to support reproductive freedom is a strong statement and symbol of values. While individual statements from local officials are excellent sources of support, we encourage elected leaders to go one step further by supporting and passing city ordinances. Ordinances outlast elected officials, who may or may not still be in power as election cycles come and go.

If you have questions about how best to engage with your local elected officials to push for proactive action, please notify us right away at: [repro@acluohio.org](mailto:repro@acluohio.org) and let us know what is going on.

### Help people who need abortion care, access abortion care

As of September 14, Ohioans can once again obtain an abortion up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. The legal battle to permanently block the six-week abortion ban is ongoing, but in the meantime, **one of the most impactful ways to support our communities is by helping people who need abortion care to access abortion care.** While the fight to win bodily autonomy is long, there are things you can be doing in your city or town to help ease the immense burden that extremist anti-abortion politicians have placed on our communities.

**Support abortion funds.** [Abortion Fund of Ohio](#) is Ohio's statewide abortion fund. This organization is dedicated to helping Ohioans afford their reproductive choices. There are also two local funds in Ohio: [Preterm](#) helps fund people needing abortion care in northeast Ohio and the [Agnes Reynolds Jackson Fund](#) serves people in northwest Ohio seeking abortion care.

**Urge your city leadership to prioritize abortion access in the city budget.** In Ohio, mayors and councilmembers hold different responsibilities depending on the city. You can find out who holds what power by researching your city government's website and ask them to do the following:

- **Pay for city employees to travel out-of-state for abortion care.**
  - An [example](#) from Cincinnati
- **Develop a program to provide grant funds to local reproductive freedom organizations to help people seeking abortion care** such as Abortion Fund of Ohio, Preterm, Aggie Fund, and Planned Parenthood.
  - Cities can expand educational programs so that pro-choice organizations can have additional capacity to answer questions related to reproductive healthcare.
  - An [example](#) out of Columbus
- **Stop funding Crisis Pregnancy Centers and investigate misleading messaging.**
  - An [example](#) from Columbus

## Decriminalize abortion and pregnancy outcomes

The goals of anti-abortion extremists are to punish those who seek, or help others seek, abortion care. We already know that low-income and minority communities are the most impacted by abortion bans, and these same communities are already often over-policed. Our heavily gerrymandered legislative districts enable extremists to shape statewide policies against the will of the majority.

**City and county officials have a significant amount of discretion when it comes to investigating and prosecuting individuals; and remember, policies can outlast a specific elected official.** It is critically important that local officials support those seeking healthcare and prevent them from being forced into our broken criminal legal system that thrives off mass incarceration.

**Urge your city council to pass legislation** directing city police to not take reports or investigate claims of potential abortion restriction violations. Your mayor may also have the power to directly instruct police.

- An [example](#) from Lakewood

**Ask local leaders to direct city officials** to *not* store or share information related to any reproductive healthcare choices — including abortion — made by any city residents.

- An [example](#) from Columbus

**Urge your county prosecutor or city attorney** to use their prosecutorial discretion to not press charges based on pregnancy outcomes. Prosecutors and city attorneys in Cleveland and Columbus have already signed the national pledge to not prosecute personal medical decisions.

- Let's add more Ohio officials to this list by asking your prosecutor to sign [this letter](#).

## Pass a local reproductive health non-discrimination ordinance

In 2021, the City of Columbus passed an ordinance that says people cannot be fired or lose housing or other public accommodations because of a reproductive healthcare decision. Ordinances like this could stop someone from being fired or losing their housing when they are forced to travel out of state to get abortion care. **As access to care becomes more and more limited, protections like these will signal to residents that their city government is minimizing the harm caused by these abortion bans.** In Columbus, the ordinance was updated by including reproductive health care decisions under the definition of 'sex'.

**Urge your city council** to adopt this type of measure. You can bring forward the [exact language used](#) in Columbus.

## Prioritize education around reproductive healthcare options — including abortion

Misinformation is rampant. It's important to make sure people have access to accurate information about both the legality of reproductive choices in the state as well as their reproductive options. **Combating misinformation will take resources.** Here are some options.

**Advocate for your local school board** to ensure comprehensive and accurate sex-education is available to all students.

- **Make sex-education curriculum viewable to public.**
  - Sex-education can vary from school to school which makes transparency on the curriculum crucial to ensure students are getting the comprehensive and inclusive education they deserve. Urge your local school board to publicly release this information to the public. Use this [Advocates For Youth Toolkit](#) as an example.
- **Put the pressure on — ask tough questions!** Here are some examples of questions you can ask of your local school board:
  - If our school uses teachers from outside the school to provide sex education, who makes the decision to approve the teacher or volunteer?
  - Who is ensuring that volunteers are qualified to provide instruction that complies with the law and is medically accurate, age-appropriate, science-based and inclusive for students of all identities and backgrounds?

**Encourage** city leadership to share resources on official government website to help residents learn more about reproductive healthcare options and abortion access.

- Some examples of reproductive healthcare organizations that could be shared are: [Pro-Choice Ohio](#) and [Abortion Fund of Ohio](#). The organizations putting forth this toolkit, do not advocate in favor of Crisis Pregnancy Centers or other unreliable sources of information, and urge city leaders to only promote resources to constituents that are comprehensive, inclusive of LGBTQ+ identities, non-coercive, and medically accurate.

## Putting abortion directly on the ballot

While this toolkit is intended to help Ohioans find ways to take local action, we know there is rapidly increasing interest in a collective effort to restore abortion access by way of a statewide ballot initiative. **Here's what you need to know about that process:**

To be put on the ballot, all proposals need to have gathered a certain number of signatures. Before the signature collecting portion can happen, a number of steps need to be taken for the proposal to be approved — the organization of a committee, creation of petition language, filing with the correct entities, fees, and more. Though this process seems cut and dry, we must be prepared for several complications, such as roadblocks created by statewide elected officials and pushback from the opposition.

**Bottom line:** When we're ready to go to the ballot, we're going to need all hands on deck — activists, community partner organizations, people who understand how abortion intersects with other issues, and certainly those who will get out in the streets and knock on doors to talk about why Ohioans will benefit from this initiative! However, as you've seen throughout this toolkit, there are multiple angles to work from to make sure abortion access is being discussed and fought for all over Ohio. **Stay tuned.**

## III. Follow The Money

### Crisis Pregnancy Centers

Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), or fake clinics, are anti-abortion centers or mobile vans that pose as reproductive healthcare clinics. These fake clinics will often have misleading names to try to convince communities that they are valid, licensed healthcare centers — **they are not**. Fake clinics deceive people with medically inaccurate information and shame people who choose or are thinking about choosing abortion.

- One quick way you can help your community better identify anti-abortion centers from real healthcare clinics is by leaving reviews on Google or Yelp stating that a CPC is not a real clinic or abortion provider.

[According to research from OPEN](#), nearly one in seven women in Ohio have gone to a fake clinic at least once. (While this research data specifically cites a statistic about women, we note that transgender and non-binary individuals are also impacted by CPCs harmful tactics.) Attendance or usage of a CPCs resources is disproportionately higher among people of color, especially Black women, and people of lower socioeconomic status. **They target these groups through taking advantage of existing disparities in access to healthcare and medically accurate information.**

- We can reduce the need for communities to turn to CPCs by advocating for doula coverage, lower healthcare costs, and easier access to formula and diapers, all of which will help pro- and postnatal and maternal health outcomes.

**There are over 100 fake clinics in Ohio and they receive substantial state funding.** In comparison, there are only nine abortion clinics in Ohio.

- Supporting local abortion funds and practical support networks helps to bridge the gap between seeking an abortion and being able to receive the abortion care a person needs.

Every year since 2013, Crisis Pregnancy Centers have received state funding. **The 2021 Ohio state budget granted fake clinics \$6 million.** In April 2022, Gov. Mike DeWine signed an executive order that granted CPCs \$1.5 million, redirected from federal funds designated for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

- This public funding could be going towards healthcare, housing, SNAP benefits, and other services that support the health, wellness, and security of Ohioans.

By following the money and monitoring CPC tactics, **we can better advocate for proactive policies and changes to the state budget**, mitigate the harm done by CPCs, and stop anti-abortion legislators from lining their pockets at the expense of Ohioans' reproductive health.

### Reproreceipts

This [resource created by UltraViolet](#), maps out the companies who donate significantly to anti-choice politicians in every state. It's important we remain informed about how our money is potentially being spent to aid in these regressive laws. Our bodily autonomy is under attack. It's no longer business as usual.

## IV. Vote Your Values

Now more than ever, it's crucial for you to vote your values and fight for your rights. Support candidates who have pledged to fight for abortion access — our reproductive rights depend on it! Elections have consequences — good and bad — and we have the power to restore abortion access through the ballot box.

For voter information related to the upcoming 2022 midterm elections, review educational resources from [ACLU of Ohio](#) and [Pro-Choice Ohio](#).

### Steps you can take in your communities

- **Register to vote.** The voter registration deadline is four weeks before any election day in Ohio. The deadline to register to vote for the November 8 midterm elections is October 11. Even if you think you are registered, it is important to check. You can do so using the [online voter registration website](#).
- **Vote in every election, especially down-ballot!** You can vote early in-person, vote by mail, or vote on Election Day. Make a plan, tell a friend, and go vote. More information can be found at the [Ohio Secretary of State website](#).
- **Elect officials across the political spectrum that will fight to restore abortion access in Ohio and preserve the right to bodily autonomy.** Some Ohio positions that are up for election this cycle are governor, U.S. senator, secretary of state, and several seats on the Supreme Court of Ohio. Learn more about [the powers of these elected officials](#) and why voting down-ballot is so important.

## V. Resources

1. **Abortion Forward Language:** [more](#)
2. **Guidelines for Having a Successful Office Visit:** [more](#)
3. **Summer 2022 Abortion Polling:** [more](#)
4. **Ohio Policy Evaluation Network research:** [more](#)
5. **Pro-Choice Ohio abortion clinics page:** [more](#)
6. **Self-Managed Abortion resource:** [more](#)