

## Avoiding Traps, Rebutting Disinformation, and Championing Reproductive Freedom and Abortion Rights

### Context

Abortion is front-and-center in the 2020 election and is a [critical issue](#) for voters, especially [Democratic voters](#) and [Iowa caucusgoers](#). Reproductive freedom is under full-blown assault -- from states pushing an unprecedented wave of bans on abortion to TRAP laws designed to shut down clinics providing abortion care to the Trump administration's domestic gag rule -- and the stakes have never been higher.

The Republican party, anti-choice candidates, and right-wing groups have employed an intentional campaign to spread disinformation about abortion in an effort to distract from the Republican party's hugely unpopular agenda to ban abortion, but as we just saw in Virginia and Kentucky, these efforts fell short. It is critical that candidates running in 2020 call out these attacks as dangerous disinformation first and foremost, then refocus to the broader issue of whether women should be able to make their own decisions about abortion and go on the offensive against Republican candidates who favor extreme policies to make most abortions illegal.

Americans across the country — in red, blue, and purple states — support reproductive freedom and candidates would be wise to make clear their commitment to ensuring every woman can make her own decisions about how, if, and when to raise a family. Seventy-seven percent of Americans [support](#) *Roe v. Wade*, and while Republicans are pushing an extreme agenda to ban abortion completely, fewer than a quarter of even their own supporters [agree](#) with that stance.

### Combating Right-Wing Disinformation About Abortion Later in Pregnancy

- These attacks are outrageous fabrications, designed to confuse and mislead voters and to deflect attention away from anti-choice politicians' efforts to ban abortion and punish women.
- Most of us try to live our lives without interfering in other people's lives. We know that a woman may end a pregnancy for different reasons.
- The decisions women make about their pregnancies are deeply personal. We cannot make a woman's decisions for her, because we haven't walked in her shoes.
- If abortion does happen later in pregnancy, it's often for very complicated reasons. Tragically, sometimes a woman gets a diagnosis of a serious health complication that threatens her life or health.
- Other times, a family learns later in pregnancy there is a very serious fetal diagnosis, or the pregnancy can't survive.
- When people are making difficult, complicated, personal medical decisions, one-size-fits-all laws don't work.

- Abortion is safe, and has been legal in this country for more than four decades. A patient's health should drive important medical decisions, not a politician's beliefs. These issues are between people, their families, and their doctors.
- Women should make these decisions with those they love and trust, not have these decisions made for them by politicians. It's wrong to interfere in people's lives like this, for political reasons. When it comes to abortion or pregnancy loss, legislators in Washington, DC and state capitals can't know what every family is going through.
- Real people going through complicated issues are going to be hurt with these one-size-fits-all restrictions.
- The fact is, their real agenda is about banning abortion. That's wrong.
- These politicians are overstepping their role, and women and families don't deserve to pay the price.

### **Viability**

- Viability is not a number. Doctors agree that every pregnancy is different and they must evaluate each individual pregnancy to determine the right care for each woman.
- Some pregnancies will never be viable.
- It is important that pregnancy decisions remain left to women in consultation with their health care providers, not politicians.

### **Planned Parenthood Funding**

- Planned Parenthood has been a trusted resource for more than 100 years, providing quality education, information, and health care to millions of people.
- More than one in five women has been to a Planned Parenthood health center in her lifetime. Often times Planned Parenthood is the only place those who live in rural or underserved areas can turn to for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care.
- Planned Parenthood health centers provide preventative care to 2.4 million patients every year- many of whom would have nowhere else to turn for basic health care screening, STD testing and treatment, and well-woman exams.
- There is no line-item in the budget for Planned Parenthood. They provide health care services to people who rely on Medicaid or other federal programs for health care.
- "Defunding" simply means those who are struggling to make ends meet would be kept from getting the health care they need.
- Attacking abortion providers harms our communities by cutting off health care from those who need it most.

### **Hyde Amendment in the Budget**

- In reality, there is never a “clean” or perfect appropriations bill.
- The Hyde Amendment is an unfair law that makes it harder for people enrolled in Medicaid, in the military, or in other circumstances to access abortion.
- However we feel about abortion, politicians shouldn’t deny a woman health coverage just because she is poor. Restrictions on abortion coverage have a disproportionate impact on low-income people, especially women of color, immigrant women, and young women.
- Whether she is enrolled in private or government-funded health insurance such as Medicaid, every woman should have coverage for a full range of pregnancy-related care, including abortion.
- A woman struggling to make ends meet needs to be able to make important personal decisions based on what is best for her circumstances.
- When a woman needs to end her pregnancy, it is important that she has access to safe medical care. Providing insurance coverage helps ensure that she will be able to see a licensed, quality health provider.
- A woman who wants to get an abortion but is denied is more likely to fall into poverty than a woman who can get an abortion.

### **Avoiding Stigmatization of Abortion (especially the “safe, legal, rare” trope)**

- Access to safe and legal abortion is a fundamental freedom. But discussing abortion in the context of “safe, legal and rare” plays into right-wing tropes and contributes to the stigmatization of and disinformation around abortion.
- Reproductive freedom and justice advocates work hard to make sure people who want to prevent pregnancy are equipped with the information and resources to try to do so—greater access to contraception, better sex education, and much more. Yet, unintended pregnancies occur for different reasons and that will always be true.
- Saying that abortion should be “rare” casts judgment on someone else’s life choices without walking in their shoes. Nobody can know what a woman is going through when making personal decisions along with those she loves and trusts.
- Meanwhile right-wing politicians, the anti-choice movement, and the Trump administration work every day to deny women birth control and accurate sex education; refuse to take on rape culture; and then shame and stigmatize women who get pregnant when they don’t want to be.
- These same extreme politicians and groups do everything in their power to make abortion difficult -- if not impossible-- to access early in pregnancy, from forcing clinic closures, to bans on funding, to mandatory and unnecessary waiting periods.

## **Embracing Reproductive Freedom as a Core Value of the Democratic Party**

- We are stronger as a party when we stand up for our core values.
- Candidates must stand loud and tall for issues like reproductive freedom, equality, a strong minimum wage, inclusion, and immigrant rights.
- To millions of Americans, this isn't some abstract fight about social issues; these are bread and butter issues that affect our ability to continue our education, hold down jobs, and plan for our future.
- Abortion access is a core tenant of who we are as a party, and the Democratic base is strongly with us. 87% of Democrats think the Supreme Court should keep *Roe v. Wade* as is.
- Anti-choice politicians continue working to strip away essential rights, passing extreme bans on abortion and trying to gut or overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The stakes could not be higher right now.
- Every Democrat must understand that the moment we are in right now requires bold, decisive action. Abortion rights, and by proxy fundamental equality in this country, cannot be up for debate.
- Access to abortion is widely popular not just within the Democratic Party but the nation as a whole -- nationally, more than seven in 10 Americans support abortion access.
- Everyone has their own beliefs about abortion. However, there's a difference between your personal beliefs and legislating those personal beliefs onto others.
- It is important for Democrats to be united on the fact that every woman and family must choose for themselves what is right for them. It is not the job of Congress or any other legislative body to determine a family's future or take choices away from women.

## **Navigating Conversations With Those Who Have Personal Religious Beliefs**

- People have personal and religious beliefs about abortion, and I'm not asking anyone to change their beliefs. But this is about legal access to a medical procedure that allows families to determine their own futures.
- I don't believe that it's my place as an elected official to decide for someone else. However we feel about abortion, it is not our place to decide for someone else whether or when they should become a parent.
- The decision about whether to have an abortion is deeply personal and one of the most important decisions a person can face. Life is complicated and there are no simple answers. These decisions are best left to women, their families, and their doctors.
- Our country was founded on the idea that no individual will be persecuted for practicing their own religion and no individual should be allowed to impose their religion on others. We shouldn't be legislating personal beliefs onto others.

- This balance is critical to affording religious freedom to every American. The idea that someone can refuse services to others is contrary to our American values.

### **Medication Abortion**

- Medication abortion is safe, effective, and proven, yet it remains out of reach for many people and massive barriers to accessing it persist.
- When someone decides to end a pregnancy, they should be able to decide on the type of care that will best meet their needs and situation. We should make sure accurate information and reliable support are available to everyone while improving access and removing barriers to safe and effective abortion methods, including medication abortion.
- Mifepristone is an FDA-approved medication to end a pregnancy with 20 years of [documented use proving](#) that it is extremely safe and effective.
- When people have accurate information about what to expect and a way to get their questions answered, they can use medication abortion safely and effectively, both in a medical setting and on their own.