Memo: Top 10 Outrageous & Extremist Anti-Choice Tactics in 2022

Last year, the anti-choice movement unleashed its most dangerous, anti-freedom narratives in an attempt to exacerbate the already turbulent landscape of abortion rights and access. Anti-choice activists and politicians led a concerted campaign against reproductive freedom—spreading medical disinformation, defending baseless bans on abortion care, and misleading the public about their ultimate agenda of power and control.

1. Anti-choice leaders amplified disinformation about the safety of medication abortion care. The anti-choice movement ramped up its attacks on medication abortion care—elevating falsehoods about its health risks and “environmental impacts” to justify medically unnecessary restrictions and challenging the FDA’s long-standing approval of mifepristone. Moreover, it continued to push the unproven, unscientific practice of “abortion pill reversal.”

2. The anti-choice movement used racist dog-whistles and said the quiet part out loud about white supremacy as a driving force behind the assault on reproductive freedom. It spread misleading, hypocritical, and racist narratives about reproductive freedom to mask the disproportionate harm that bans and restrictions have on communities of color, including Black, Latina/x, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous people. It should come as no surprise that the anti-choice movement advocated for voter suppression and barriers to voting, which have systematically disenfranchised people of color.

3. Following the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision, the anti-choice movement attempted to downplay, distract, and deflect from its regressive agenda and the harm it is causing. Anti-choice activists quickly sought to rebrand the Dobbs decision as a “win for women” and falsely claimed that Roe v. Wade was “extreme” and “unpopular.” Many
anti-choice politicians touted the decision as “pro-democracy” and claimed it was an opportunity to return decisions related to abortion back to the states.

4. After denying that their goal was to ban abortion care nationwide, anti-choice politicians introduced a federal abortion ban that they outrageously billed as “moderate.” In September, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) introduced a national ban on abortion that anti-choice leaders framed as “compassionate” and the “least” Congress could do to “protect women.” Nonetheless, anti-choice activists claimed the ban didn’t go far enough and called for legislation to lock ideological language into law defining when life begins and criminalize abortion, also known as “fetal personhood” measures.

5. Anti-choice leaders targeted birth control and IVF as part of their quest to roll back all our reproductive freedoms. The anti-choice movement never intended to stop with ending Roe and ratcheted up its medical disinformation campaign against contraception and in vitro fertilization (IVF). Anti-choice leaders fearmongered about the “risks” and “safety” of contraceptive care and falsely conflated it with abortion. Similarly, they perpetuated false narratives about IVF treatment by alleging that it was “unethical” and “practicing eugenics.” Anti-choice politicians, including Georgia Governor Kemp and legislators in Tennessee, are already indicating support for restrictions on contraception and IVF.
6. The anti-choice movement’s fake feminism and commitment to “protecting women” was a smokescreen to conceal the dangers of anti-choice policies. Under the guise of supporting “female empowerment” and “gender equality,” anti-choice activists continuously attacked reproductive freedom. They purported to be advocates for and protectors of cisgender women while obscuring their regressive and harmful views of gender.

7. To further position itself as the defender of (cisgender) women and appeal to the Religious Right, the anti-choice movement perpetuated transphobia and regressive views on gender. Anti-choice activists claimed that gender inclusivity was an “appropriation” of womanhood. Their vehement support for anti-trans legislation and promotion of blatantly trans-exclusionary, gender-essentialist narratives underscored their dangerous and discriminatory objectives.

8. Anti-choice actors defended their on-the-ground disinformation machines: fake health centers. The anti-choice movementouted fake health centers as “alternatives to abortion,” falsely claiming that they “support” pregnant people. In practice, fake health centers—sometimes known as “crisis pregnancy centers”—notoriously use coercive messaging, medical disinformation about abortion care, and deceptive tactics to manipulate pregnant people’s decisions and attempt to block them from having an abortion.
9. The anti-choice movement sought to **downplay** its midterm **election losses** by misrepresenting public support for abortion. Anti-choice politicians were **purveyors of disinformation** on the campaign trail and **laid bare** the movement’s **patriarchal** endgame of control over people’s decisions about if, when, and how to start or grow their families. To distract from strong voter opposition to its extremism and advance its anti-democracy agenda, anti-choice activists argued that the midterm **election results** were **fraudulent** and the **reproductive freedom movement** “bought” the election.

10. Finally, the anti-choice movement made unfounded **accusations** of “**censorship**” from **tech** platforms when faced with disinformation **accountability measures**. Anti-choice activists **baselessly claimed** content moderation constituted “**discrimination**” and “**suppression**” and doubled down on the false narrative that they are victims of “**Big Tech**.” In reality, their movement has thrived under lax internet policies that favor them. Despite these claims of suppression, platforms like **Facebook** and **YouTube** allow anti-choice propaganda to spread, especially in **Spanish-language** media.

**Pushing Back on the Anti-Choice Movement in 2023**

The stakes for abortion rights and access are higher than ever in 2023, and the reproductive freedom movement must clearly define the villains who led us to this moment of crisis. Calling out the anti-choice movement for its deceptive and cruel attacks on our fundamental rights is essential. In stark contrast with the anti-choice movement’s extremist agenda, the
reproductive freedom movement is working to build a world in which everybody is free to make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and their futures. In the new year, we must continue to combat anti-choice disinformation and reclaim a narrative centered on pregnant people, medical consensus, and compassion when discussing reproductive care.