



DRAFT RELEASE

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Research Finds Abortion Safety Information May Reduce Support for Restrictive Laws

AUSTIN, Texas—New research from the [Texas Policy Evaluation Project](#) (TxPEP) at the University of Texas at Austin shows that providing information about abortion safety may reduce support for laws restricting abortion. The study assessed the opinions of Texas voters on two provisions of House Bill 2 (HB 2)—the restrictive Texas abortion law that was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2016. Half of participants received scientifically accurate statements about abortion safety, and the other half did not receive any information. Voters who received the information were less likely to report that ambulatory surgical center (ASC) requirements for abortion facilities and hospital admitting privileges for physicians would make abortion safer.

The research, based on a survey of 1,183 Texas voters between May and June 2016, was recently published online in [Contraception](#).

“This study identifies a significant opportunity for public health professionals and reproductive rights advocates to educate voters about the safety of abortion and bring public opinion more in line with scientific evidence,” Kari White, TxPEP investigator and lead author of the study, said. “This would reduce support for restrictions that claim to make abortion safer.”

The study also found that voters across the political spectrum who had not heard of the regulations had similar views about their impact on safety. However, there was much greater variation between more liberal and conservative voters if they had heard of the regulations. Respondents who identified as conservative Republicans and had heard of the ASC and admitting privileges requirements before the survey were especially likely to believe the regulations would make abortion safer.

For example, 82 percent of conservative Republicans who had heard of the ASC requirement thought it would make abortion safer, compared to 52 percent who had not heard of it. Among the respondents who identified as liberal Democrats and had heard of the ASC requirement, 17 percent thought it would make abortion safer, compared to 42 percent of liberal Democrats who had not heard of the provision before.

“The implication is that it is important to reach voters soon after such regulations are passed, and to provide them with accurate evidence as to the law’s likely impact on safety before they hear about the laws from members of their local community or partisan groups,” Joseph Potter, TxPEP principal investigator and co-author of the study, said.

Recently, Texas passed [HB 13](#), a restrictive abortion law that would require additional reporting on complications from abortion, effective November 14, 2017. Medical complications from abortion are very rare, and the new law requires reporting of personal, medically unnecessary information including the patient’s marital status. While the impact of this law remains to be seen, it is highly unlikely it would improve the health and safety of women.

Shortly after this study was conducted, the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) overturned two provisions of HB 2—the ASC and admitting privileges requirements—citing an undue burden on women’s access to abortion and no documented health and safety benefits.

The full citation for the paper is:

White K, Grossman D., Stevenson A.J., Hopkins K, Potter J.E. Does Information About Abortion Safety Affect Texas Voters’ Opinions About Restrictive Laws?, *Contraception*. Pp 1-16 Online First 2017.

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About the Texas Policy Evaluation Project

The [Texas Policy Evaluation Project](#), or TxPEP, is a comprehensive effort to document and analyze the impact of the measures affecting reproductive health passed by the Texas Legislature. The project team includes researchers at the University of Texas Population Research Center, the University of California San Francisco, Ibis Reproductive Health, and the University of Alabama-Birmingham. The project is supported by grants from the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation and the Society of Family Planning. Infrastructure support for the Population Research Center is provided by a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Funders of the Texas Policy Evaluation Project have no role in the design and conduct of the research, interpretation of the data, approval of the final manuscript or decision to publish.

***Editor’s note:** For more information or to request a copy of the study, contact Kat Harris (kharris@echristianpr.com) or Cynthia Martinez (cmartinez@echristianpr.com) or call 512.472.9599.*