The Economics of Abortion Access

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Health Systems - The Next Generation Forum 2023
Georgia Tech
October 31, 2023
Why is abortion an economic issue?

• An unwanted/early pregnancy can change someone’s life trajectory and lead to inferior economic outcomes
  • ↓ educational attainment, ↓ labor force participation, ↑ reliance on cash assistance, ↑ falling below the poverty threshold

• The inability to access abortion services can prevent the interruption of an unwanted pregnancy. Why?
  • Time and monetary costs associated with reaching an abortion facility
  • Transportation costs
  • Childcare
  • Time out of work/lost wages

• These costs can be large enough to prevent someone from obtaining an abortion
How can abortion policies impact people’s economic outcomes?

Example: Targeted regulations of abortion providers, TRAP laws (Jones and Pineda-Torres, 2023)

- These are regulations on abortion facilities’ operation and/or buildings’ physical structure
- Between 1993-2017, TRAP laws increased teen births by 3.5%
- Black women’s exposure to TRAP laws before age 18 reduced their probability of entering and completing college by 2.1% and 5.8%, respectively

TRAP laws are ”smaller” policies than abortion bans → Impacts of abortion bans may be greater
Where are we now?

- On June 24, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*
  - The U.S. Constitution does not confer a right to abortion

Source: Center for Reproductive Rights
What have been the impacts of *Dobbs* so far?

Birth rates in states that have banned abortion relative to protective states have increased by 1.1 births per 1,000 women in the first 6 months of 2023 *(Dench and Pineda-Torres, 2023)*

- About 17,559 additional births