



Eliminate Forced Parental Involvement in Contraception and Abortion

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Now — more than ever — young people need complete autonomy over whether and when to become parents. The impact of COVID-19 on pregnant people, fetuses, and newborns remains unknown, and many young people who can become pregnant are facing extreme economic uncertainty - factors that make access to both contraception and abortion critical during this time. Yet the fallout of the pandemic has reduced or eliminated young people's access to contraception and abortion. Stay-at-home orders and arbitrary designation of "non-essential" healthcare have driven some states to attempt banning abortion entirely, and some organizations providing contraception have had to close or reduce services. These pandemic related barriers are mere additions to one of the largest barriers to young people's autonomy: laws forcing them to involve a parent to obtain contraception or abortion. **Lawmakers should eliminate laws that force young people to involve a parent to obtain contraception and abortion care.**

Young people are **more likely to access contraception** when care is confidential, yet 24 states still require parental involvement in teens' contraceptive choices. In addition to removing parental consent laws, lawmakers should prohibit insurers from sending an explanation-of-benefits to a parent and expand access to free or low-cost contraception

Our research shows we can trust young people to make their own pregnancy decisions wisely — they thoroughly consider all pregnancy options, and accurately predict when telling their parents would expose them to abandonment or abuse. Laws in 37 states force young people to obtain consent from or notify a parent before accessing abortion care. Such laws force teens who need an abortion to either travel out of state (which is increasingly difficult and ill-advised during the pandemic) or attempt to obtain a judicial bypass of parental consent. Judicial bypass requires a young person to attend an in-person court proceeding, **delaying** and sometimes **eliminating** access to abortion care. Due to stay-at-home orders, many courthouses are closed — so some young people can't access abortion at all, even if their state still allows it.

Eliminating parental involvement laws will increase access to timely contraception and abortion and protect teens from becoming pregnant when they don't want to be and from traveling out of state for abortion, being **humiliated in court**, or being forced to remain pregnant. At a minimum, states with parental involvement laws should immediately allow remote judicial bypass proceedings.

Although the future is uncertain, the safety of contraception and abortion is not — both are safer than carrying a pregnancy to term. The **American Academy of Pediatrics** and other health professional organizations oppose forced parental involvement. Restricting access to contraception and abortion puts young people's lives, health, and futures in jeopardy, especially during a pandemic.