

Resolution

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2021, a law prohibiting abortion in the State of Texas once “cardiac activity” is detected in the gestational sac went into effect; and

WHEREAS, the law effectively bans abortion before many are aware they are pregnant; and

WHEREAS, reproductive freedom is an essential health necessity and the decision to continue with a pregnancy is a deeply personal, private decision best left to patients, their family, and their doctor; and

WHEREAS, research shows that access to reproductive health services, including abortion, correlates to higher educational attainment and increased economic security. Individuals who are denied access are more likely to rely on public assistance and have incomes below the federal poverty level;¹ and

WHEREAS, the Texas law makes no exception for pregnancies that result from rape, sexual abuse, or incest, nor for pregnancies involving a fetal defect incompatible with life after birth and the law’s only exception is for an undefined “medical emergency . . . that prevents compliance” with the law; and

WHEREAS, outlawing abortion six weeks after conception forces those who wish to obtain these services to travel outside Texas to other states in order to exercise their constitutional rights, it hinders businesses and non-profits in Harris County who seek to assist those who have decided to exercise their right to early termination of a pregnancy, and it will inevitably cause desperate patients to be maimed or die due to “back-alley” abortions; and

WHEREAS, the Texas abortion law limits patients’ access to medical care and interferes with the patient-physician relationship by dissuading clinicians in the State of Texas from providing patients with the medical care they need; and

WHEREAS, the Texas abortion law creates a vigilante, bounty-style enforcement mechanism that deputizes private parties to sue anyone who performs, “knowingly” “aids or abets,” or intends to assist in the inducement or performance of an abortion, and in that way claim a \$10,000 (plus court costs and fees) bounty; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court in the Texas-based case of *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), on January 22, 1973, vindicated a woman’s right to choose whether to end a pregnancy without excessive government restriction; and

WHEREAS, those in medical professions, related care, and transportation industries have the right to pursue their professions without fear of persecution by their fellow citizens; now, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Harris County Commissioners Court hereby proclaims its strong opposition to the law and its impacts, as well as to the private civil prosecution of Harris County residents who assist those who have made the difficult, personal decision to terminate a pregnancy under the rights protected by *Roe v. Wade*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Harris County Commissioners Court supports the Biden Administration’s legal action against the State of Texas; and

¹ AAUW, Reproductive Freedom is Tied to Women’s Economic Security, available at <https://ww3.aauw.org/2018/01/18/reproductive-freedom-is-tied-to-womens-economic-security/>.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Harris County Commissioners Court directs the Commissioners Court’s Analyst’s Office to investigate opportunities to support individuals impacted by this law or otherwise mitigate the law’s negative effects; and

It is hereby ***ORDERED*** that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Commissioners Court this 14th day of September 2021.

LINA HIDALGO, County Judge

RODNEY ELLIS, Commissioner
Precinct One

ADRIAN GARCIA, Commissioner
Precinct Two

TOM S. RAMSEY, P.E., Commissioner
Precinct Three

R. JACK CAGLE, Commissioner
Precinct Four

ATTEST:

Teneshia Hudspeth, County Clerk
Harris County, T E X A S