



OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER

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NEWS RELEASE

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Reproductive Health and Access to Care Work Group formed as U.S. Supreme Court decision nears

*Group will aim to protect, strengthen, and expand equitable access to abortion,
reproductive and gender-affirming health care*

SALEM – As the United States Supreme Court moves closer to overturning 50 years of precedent set by the *Roe v. Wade* decision and states across the country aim to fully ban abortion, Oregon House Speaker Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) today announced the formation of the Reproductive Health and Access to Care Work Group.

“It was truly inspiring this past weekend to see thousands of Oregonians take to the streets to protest ongoing attacks against reproductive freedom,” Rayfield said. “Time and again, Oregonians have clearly affirmed their support for making abortion and other care safe and accessible to all. While other states roll back protections and attempt to criminalize health care access, this collaborative process with providers, clinics and elected leaders will make sure Oregon is prepared to support access to care in this changing landscape. We can’t be complacent.”

“This is an ‘all-hands on deck’ moment,” Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum said. “Oregon can and must continue to be a leader for reproductive justice. I pledge to work alongside our elected champions and community partners to help keep Oregon a safe and welcoming place for anyone from anywhere who seeks access to abortion care.”

The work group of providers, clinics, community organizations, and legislators will focus on making recommendations to the Speaker for consideration in the 2023 legislative session and beyond. Recommendations may include policy, administrative, and budget proposals to protect, strengthen, and expand equitable access to all forms of reproductive care, gender-affirming care, and quality of care.

Recommendations may also include protections for populations being targeted, including LGBTQ+ children, families, and adults; reproductive and gender-affirming care patients and providers; health navigators and assisters; and more. The work group may also evaluate risks and mitigate legislative and legal gaps in the event that the U.S. Supreme Court attempts to overturn other landmark decisions protecting the rights to use of contraceptives and more.

“Justice Alito’s draft opinion has made clear that many freedoms are no longer safe, including basic access to contraceptives,” Rep. Travis Nelson (D-N/NE Portland) said. “We have to prepare for a future in which opponents of reproductive freedom are committed to turning the clock back even further. It’s outrageous and unprecedented, and we will be prepared if these nightmares become reality.”

The work group will aim to build on the protections and funding Oregon lawmakers have passed in recent years.

In 2017, legislative leaders and advocates recognized long-term threats to abortion access and passed the Reproductive Health Equity Act (RHEA), which codifies the right to an abortion in state law and makes family planning, abortion, and postpartum care available to all Oregonians.

In March, Democratic leadership established and made a \$15 million investment in the Reproductive Health Equity Fund to mitigate harm from the looming Supreme Court decision, address urgent patient needs for abortion funds and practical support – like travel and lodging – and to expand provider network capacity.

Eastern Oregonians who rely on Boise and Meridian as the closest health centers could see an up to [35% decrease](#) in access to care when Idaho bans abortion. According to the Guttmacher Institute, Oregon could experience a potential [234% increase](#) in people traveling to the state depending upon the bans that go into effect, creating added barriers for people seeking abortion care locally. Abortion restrictions have a disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous and other people of color, who continue to be most harmed by gaps in access to abortion care.

“Wealthy individuals and those with resources and power will always be able to access abortion,” Rep. Andrea Valderrama (D-East Portland) said. “The impact of overturning Roe will be felt largely by Black, Latino and Indigenous people, immigrants, people living with low incomes, and people in rural areas. Our communities have long faced barriers to abortion access and will be a focal point of this work.”

Additionally, [over half of U.S. state legislatures](#) have considered banning best-practice medical care for trans youth, prompting some families with resources to move across state lines.

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