

MD REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ADVOCATES NETWORK

February 2026 Newsletter

Hello, Reproductive Justice Advocates!

We hope you and yours are staying safe and well. It's hard to believe that we're halfway through the 2026 Maryland Legislative Session. While national news on reproductive justice continues to be a whirlwind, important bills regarding abortion care, gender-affirming care, maternal health, and more are being considered right now!

BODILY AUTONOMY/REPRO JUSTICE BILL TRACKER

Read on for updates, news, resources, and upcoming events related to reproductive justice!

STATE UPDATES

Maryland Redirected Money to Meet Abortion Demand. Then the Feds Stepped In.

Last year, Maryland passed legislation to create a roughly \$25 million abortion fund using leftover funds from a mandatory \$1-per-month fee for every policy sold on Maryland's health exchange for use by enrollees seeking abortions. The federal administration just needed to sign off on shifting this money from being used for specific policies to creating a general fund. Perhaps unsurprising, they have rejected the reallocation, blocking the abortion fund from moving forward. Senator Guzzone and Delegate Lopez are trying to pass legislation ([SB0785/](#)[HB1159](#)) that could save the fund.

[Read more from Meredith Cohn and Pamela Wood in the Baltimore Banner here.](#)

Maryland Lawmakers 'Disheartened' by Persistent Inequities in Black Maternal Health Outcomes

In a recent briefing, the House Health Committee pressed state health officials on a lack of progress in bettering maternal health outcomes for Black women, which continuously falls behind women of other races and ethnicities. "From 2019 through 2023, Maryland had a maternal mortality rate of 21 per 100,000 births across all races and ethnicities, according to data from the [Maryland Department of](#)

[Health](#). But for Black mothers the mortality rate was 30 deaths per 100,000 live births." Delegate White-Holland, the chair of the Maternal, Childhood and Infant Health Subcommittee, and a new mom, is committed to addressing this disparity this session.

[Read more from Danielle J. Brown in Maryland Matters here.](#)

2026 Bodily Autonomy/Reproductive Justice Bill Tracker

We're [tracking bills related to reproductive justice in this spreadsheet](#), which we'll be updating once a week (usually on Mondays). Now that the introduction deadline has passed, we have the full picture on what legislators are considering. Are there any bills you're watching that you want to be included on this list? Email Alice (alice@advancemaryland.org).

Trans Maryland also has [an excellent policy tracker on their website here.](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

Nevada Will Pay \$100,000 to a Woman Jailed for Stillbirth. It's Nowhere Near Enough.

Patrice Rousseau spent over two years incarcerated in Nevada after she suffered from pregnancy loss and buried the remains in her backyard. Rousseau had struggled with substance abuse, and was arrested for manslaughter due to a 1911 law that criminalizes taking drugs to induce abortion after 24 weeks. Her attorney argued that the state never proved that her pregnancy loss was the result of drug use so her conviction was vacated five years ago. Now, the state has agreed to pay her \$100,000 as a part of a settlement.

Abortion, Every Day says it best: "This isn't a one-off case. There have been over 400 pregnancy-related arrests since the end of Roe, and a Pregnancy Justice [report](#) shows that nearly half of states have laws that criminalize the disposal of pregnancy loss remains, non-reporting of pregnancy loss remains, and the transportation or concealment of these remains."

[Read more from Jessica Valenti and Kylie Cheung in Abortion, Every Day here.](#)

Seeking Transparency on Trump's Greenlighting of Violence Against Abortion Providers and Patients

The Center for Reproductive Rights is suing the Trump administration over its decision to selectively stop enforcing the FACE Act—a bipartisan law that protects abortion providers and patients from violence and harassment—and to pardon individuals already convicted under this law. "On January 23, 2025—just days after taking office—he pardoned 23 people convicted of [violating the FACT Act](#); and one day later, the Department of Justice (DOJ) directed its Civil Rights Division to dismiss pending abortion-related FACT Act prosecutions." The Center filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests regarding these actions which were ignored, so now they're suing to get these records.

[Read more about this lawsuit from the Center for Reproductive Rights here.](#)

Explainer: What Does a Law Protecting Abortion Clinics Have to Do with Don Lemon?

Meanwhile, the administration has been using the FACE Act to target reporters and the freedom of the press. At a protest in a church in Minneapolis—where the church's pastor was working for ICE—CNN anchor Don Lemon and independent journalist Georgia Fort were both arrested and charged with violating the right to religious freedom in the FACT Act.

[Read more from Daniel Weissner in Reuters here](#), and from [Elisha Brown in the Louisiana Illuminator here](#).

Pregnant Patients in Minnesota have Postponed Abortion Appointments to Avoid ICE

The horrific mass ICE raids in Minnesota have caused immigrants and community members to skip or postpone crucial appointments. "Since December 1, Planned Parenthood clinics in Minnesota have seen their no-show rate increases by about 8.2 percent, a notable increase that the organization attributes to the prolonged federal offensive, said Ruth Richardson, CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States."

[Read more from Shefali Luthra in the 19th here.](#)

'I was Violated and Put in Extreme Danger': Women Denied Abortions Sue over Arkansas Ban

Last month, four women in Arkansas filed a lawsuit challenging the state's near-total abortion ban, saying that the laws violate constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Three of the women were denied medically necessary abortions, despite the fact that they had had miscarriages or their pregnancy wasn't viable and could've faced dire health consequences as a result.

[Read more from Carter Sherman in the Guardian here.](#)

Louisiana AG Liz Murrill Plans to Sue New York, California in Battle over Abortion Pills

"Louisiana's attorney general is preparing to sue California Gov. Gavin Newsom and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul in federal court in an effort to force those states to extradite doctors who [face criminal charges](#) for mailing pills to Louisiana for abortions." Both California and New York have refused to comply with the extradition requests, citing their shielding laws that protect abortion care providers who provide telehealth care to those in restrictive states.

[Read more from Alyse Pfeil in Nola.com here.](#)

Federal Prisons Bar Gender-Affirming Care for Trans People

A horrifying new ruling from the Bureau of Prisons, the federal prison system will no longer be providing any gender-affirming medical care. Trans people incarcerated in federal prisons will no longer have access to surgery, medications, clothing, or toiletry items that affirm their gender identity. Instead, the primary treatments will be therapy and psychiatric medications. This policy clearly disregards the needs of incarcerated trans people, and is the latest move in the federal administration's attack on trans rights.

[Read more from Beth Schwartzapfel in The Marshall Project here.](#)

HHS Will Allow Pharmacies to Boycott Lifesaving Drugs Used in Medication Abortion

After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, the Biden Administration instituted a policy to require pharmacies that receive any federal funding to carry and dispense mifepristone, misoprostol, and methotrexate, drugs used for medication abortion and treatment of ectopic pregnancies, in order not to discriminate on the basis of sex and disability. Last month, the Trump administration formally withdrew that rule. This is especially concerning because methotrexate has other life-saving uses, including treating autoimmune disorders. Anti-abortion pharmacists can now refuse to stock any of these drugs and still receive federal funding.

[Read more from Julia Métraux in Mother Jones here.](#)

Federal Court Hears Arguments in a Lawsuit, *Louisiana v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)*, that Threatens to Imminently Limit Nationwide Access to Mifepristone

On February 24, a federal court in Louisiana heard arguments in a lawsuit, *Louisiana v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)*, that threatens to imminently limit nationwide access to mifepristone. Louisiana is asking the court to reinstate medically unnecessary, burdensome restrictions that would effectively end telehealth access to mifepristone nationwide—requiring patients to pick up the medication in person at a clinic, hospital, or medical office, even in states where abortion is legal and constitutionally protected. A ruling in the case could come down any time after the hearing.

[Read more from Reproductive Freedom for All here](#), [the ACLU here](#), and [Planned Parenthood here](#).

Trump Administration is Sending Pregnant Migrant Girls to South Texas Shelter Flagged as Medically Inadequate

"Government sources and advocates for the children worry the goal is to concentrate them in Texas, where abortion is banned.

The Trump administration is sending all pregnant unaccompanied minors apprehended by immigration enforcement to a single group shelter in South Texas. The decision was made over urgent objections from the administration's own health and child welfare officials, who say both the facility and the region lack the specialized care the girls need."

[Read more from Mark Betancourt in KUT News here](#), and from [Kylie Cheung in Abortion, Every Day here](#).

The Next Phase of the Abortion Wars: Targeting Pills, Helpers, and Patients

Four years after *Dobbs* and a year into the second Trump administration, the attacks on reproductive healthcare are evolving. *Ms. Magazine* details the lay of the land, the current strategies that states are using to attack reproductive freedom, and some reasons for hope.

[Read more from Ava Slocum in Ms. Magazine here](#).

RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Beyond the Labels: AAPI Women on Abortion Care, Dignity, and Criminalization

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) just released a crucial new report, *Beyond the Labels: AAPI Women on Abortion Care, Dignity, and Criminalization*.

This report is the largest national, multilingual Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) abortion study of its kind, with groundbreaking findings about how AAPI women across more than 25 ethnicities are thinking about and engaging with abortion rights. Despite the AAPI population being the fastest-growing racial group in the United States, composed of over 24 million individuals from over 50 ethnic groups, AAPI-specific research on abortion remains rare. Our findings illuminate AAPI women's attitudes and understanding of abortion, the barriers our communities face in accessing care, and the messages that resonate most strongly.

[Read the topline and download the report here.](#)

What's Happening to Pregnant, Postpartum, and Nursing Women in ICE Custody?

"While the Trump administration calls itself "pro-family," U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is detaining pregnant, postpartum, and nursing women and subjecting them to inhumane and dangerous treatment." They're miscarrying, being denied medical care, being denied basic necessities, put in solitary confinement and shackled, and being separated from their families. The Center for Reproductive Rights recently released this important piece with firsthand accounts from pregnant people who have been detained in ICE custody.

[Read this important piece from the Center for Reproductive Rights here.](#)

EVENTS

The Nation — Killers of Roe: A Virtual Conversation with Amy Littlefield and Regina Mahone

Thursday, March 12 at 12 PM online

[Learn more and RSVP here](#)

Join us for a virtual conversation featuring Amy Littlefield, The Nation's abortion access correspondent, and the prize-winning author of the upcoming book *Killers of Roe* and Nation senior editor Regina Mahone.

Have an upcoming event you want us to highlight in our next newsletter?

Email alice@advancemaryland.org.

Paid for by the Advance Maryland Education Fund

c/o Progress Now Education

614 Seymour Ave

Lansing, MI 48933