

MD REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ADVOCATES NETWORK

April 2026 Newsletter

Hello, Reproductive Justice Advocates!

We made it through the 2026 legislative session! We hope you've been able to get some rest.

Want to know which bodily autonomy and reproductive justice bills passed? [Check out our final updated bill tracker](#). Bills that passed are dark green in column 'H' – current status.

Read on for news, resources, and events related to reproductive justice and bodily autonomy! **Don't miss the Abortion Fund of Maryland's [Fund-A-Thon Finale party](#) on May 14th at the end 😊 Sounds like a great time!**

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STATE UPDATES

House Gives Final OK to Bill Codifying Guarantee to Emergency Abortions

After three years of trying, Maryland passed legislation to codify EMTALA! The legislation ensures that pregnant Marylanders can receive emergency abortion care at any hospital, including faith-based facilities. Last year, the Trump administration revoked a Biden-era guidance that had clarified emergency abortion rights under federal law protecting public access to emergency services regardless of ability to pay. By codifying EMTALA in Maryland, emergency abortion care is protected regardless of the federal administration.

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

Health Officials Worry as They Weigh Impact of Supreme Court's Conversion Therapy Ruling

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Colorado's law banning conversion therapy violated therapists' First Amendment rights by regulating what they could say in "talk therapy" sessions, raising concerns that Maryland's ban is now vulnerable to legal challenges despite conversion therapy being

discredited by major medical societies. Gov. Wes Moore said the administration was reviewing the ruling with Attorney General Anthony Brown to “determine the full implications for Maryland law and any appropriate next steps.” Legislation to address the implications of this ruling didn’t pass this session, but legislators are looking to address concerns and keep Marylanders safe from conversion therapy next year.

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

Attorney General Brown Wins Lawsuit Protecting Gender-Affirming Care

Attorney General Anthony G. Brown and a coalition of 22 states won a federal court order blocking an unlawful attempt by the Trump administration to threaten healthcare providers that provide gender affirming care for young people. Last December, Secretary Kennedy attempted to give HHS the power to exclude healthcare providers from Medicare and Medicaid programs simply for providing care for transgender adolescents.

Revoking federal funding would be a "virtual death sentence" for any hospital system, and the declaration was cited by over 40 hospital systems who ended their trans youth care programs earlier this year. In a huge victory for gender affirming care, the ruling immediately bars the Trump administration from implementing the declaration or any materially similar policy. The 49-page decision lambasted the administration for disregarding the law and overreaching its regulations, decrying RFK Jr's "wanton disregard" for the law that "causes very real harm to very real people," and said "ensuring leaders are unsafe."

[Read the press release from the OAG's office here.](#)

[Read more from Erin Reed for Truthout here.](#)

[Read more from Melody Schreiber in The Guardian here.](#)

Sexual Violence is a Public Health Crisis, It's Time We Treated It Like One

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Katie Curran O'Malley and Michelle Daugherty Siri published a powerful opinion piece in Maryland Matters outlining how our societal response to sexual assault must change. By moving to a collaborative, trauma-informed, public health crisis approach, as we did with drunk driving in the 80's, we can support survivors and help them heal.

[Read the full oped from Katie Curran O'Malley, executive director of the Women's Law Center of Maryland, and Michelle Daugherty Siri, the former executive director of the Women's Law Center of Maryland in Maryland Matters here.](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

Telehealth Abortion will Remain Available for Now, After a Federal Judge's Ruling

A Louisiana federal court ruled to pause Louisiana et. al. v. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a cause designed to dramatically restrict abortion care through blocking telehealth access to mifepristone. While nationwide access to mifepristone is unchanged for now, the ruling leaves the food open to future restrictions on mifepristone by requesting the FDA continue its politically motivated "safety review" of the pill and report back to the court after 6 months.

[Read more from Selena Simmons-Duffin for NPR here.](#)

Republicans Are Mad Teen Pregnancies Are Down

Following a CDC report revealing the U.S. birth rate is at a record low, largely driven by a 7% drop in the teen birth rate, Republicans are upset. On a Fox News segment, medical analyst Marc Siegel literally said: "We still have 3.6 million births a year, but the problem is teens and young adults. From ages 15-19, the fertility rate is down 7%, and it's down 70% over the last two decades, meaning we're telling people who are young not to have babies."

[Read more from Claire Guinan in Jezebel here.](#)

South Carolina Senate Will Vote on Bill to Jail Abortion Patients

South Carolina is considering legislation to jail abortion patients – even rape victims and people with babies born with fatal fetal abnormalities – for two years. If SB 1095 passes, South Carolina would be the first state to explicitly criminalize abortion patients, providers, funders, or people who help a friend get abortion care. Students for Life have endorsed SB 1095, marking the first time in history that a national anti-abortion group has supported jailing patients.

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

Tennessee Bill Targeting Mailed Abortion Pills Allows \$1M Civil Lawsuits, Heads to Gov. Lee

Highlighting the need for strong shielding laws, Tennessee's Senate Bill 1052, which passed the Senate 25-5 and House 68-23, creates a Texas-style private enforcement mechanism allowing any individual to

sue anyone who knowingly mails abortion pills into the state for up to \$1 million per violation. The bill now awaits action from Republican Gov. Bill Lee and aims to protect Tennessee's existing near-total abortion ban from being circumvented through mail-order medication abortion, regardless of whether the sender is located in Tennessee or another state.

[Read more from Kelly Milan for WKRN here.](#)

Repro Rights Gets Two Big Court Wins

Two more big court wins: a Pennsylvania court has struck down the state's ban on public funding for abortion! In a 4-3 decision, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania ruled that the state constitution contains "a fundamental right to reproductive autonomy" and that the ban on funding violates the state's Equal Rights Amendment. A Michigan judge also struck down the state law that prevented pregnant people from having their end-of-life wishes respected. The judge ruled that the law violates the right to reproductive freedom codified in the state's constitution.

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

Federal Judge Rules Against Birth Control Coverage

A federal judge ruled that Oregon Right to Life is exempt from a state law requiring insurance plans to provide abortion and contraception coverage, accepting the anti-abortion organization's argument that they shouldn't have to cover "abortifacients, sometimes mislabeled as contraceptives"—including emergency contraception and IUDs. While Oregon's Attorney General believes the decision will only apply to this specific organization rather than broadly striking down the law, reproductive rights advocates warn the ruling advances the anti-abortion movement's strategy of redefining certain forms of birth control as abortion and could encourage similar lawsuits in other states.

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

Trump Administration Shifts Focus of Title X Program Away from Birth Control

After a chaotic application process that gave clinics just one week to apply, Title X health centers received their 2026 federal funding at approximately the same levels as 2025, but new guidelines for 2027 signal a major shift away from the program's original mission of expanding contraception access toward promoting "natural family planning" methods like fertility awareness tracking.

In the 67-page memo, "contraception" is mentioned once, "birth control" and "IUD" aren't mentioned at all – but "natural family planning" is mentioned four times. The Trump administration's new guidelines have raised concerns among reproductive health advocates about whether clinics will still be able to

offer hormonal birth control to the 2.8 million low-income and uninsured patients who rely on Title X services.

Lots of great sources for this one:

[Read more from Aria Bendix for NBC News here.](#)

[Read a deep dive on the guidance \(including attacks on IVF and porn\) from Kylie Cheung in Abortion, Every Day here.](#)

[Read an opinion piece by Moira Donegan, a Guardian US columnist in the Guardian here.](#)

'Trad Wife' Influencers Spreading Far Right Disinformation Against Birth Control

'Trad wife' influencers on social media are spreading disinformation about hormonal birth control to young people – which is a problem as more and more people (especially young people) are getting their health information from social media. Doctors say they are now hearing these talking points from their patients, and spending appointment time dispelling these conservative myths. This is part of a larger political project supported by the federal administration and conservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation to stigmatize the pill and other hormonal birth control by seeding doubt around the safety – despite the fact that pregnancy is far more dangerous than contraception.

“Heritage and allied thinkers explicitly argue that women’s ability to control their fertility is a root cause of declining marriage and birth rates, and promote policies that would push women to marry young, have more children, and rely financially on husbands rather than on degrees or careers. Weakening access to contraception is one way to make that traditional, male-headed family model harder to opt out of.”

[Read more from Bonnie Fuller for The National Memo here.](#)

Trump Wants Data on California's Trans and Abortion Care. Can the State Stop Him?

A proposed bill in California’s Assembly would require medical providers and businesses to notify the state attorney general, patients, and other providers before complying with any federal subpoena seeking abortion, gender-affirming, or reproductive care information, with violators facing up to \$15,000 in civil penalties per violation. The bill was prompted by Trump administration subpoenas to hospitals like Children's Hospital Los Angeles seeking transgender youth patient records.

[Read more from Ryan Sabalow and Kristen Hwang for CalMatters here.](#)

The State of Abortion Access in 2026

On the NPR 1A podcast, Mary Zielger – law professor, University of California; author, “Roe: The History of a National Obsession,” Shefali Luthra – health reporter, The 19th; author, “Undue Burden: Life and Death Decisions in Post-Roe America,” and Kelly Baden – Vice President for Public Policy, Guttmacher Institute discuss the state of abortion access in 2026.

[Listen to the episode hosted by Jenn White for WAMU / NPR here.](#)

Ohio Supreme Court Hears Trans Rights Case on Parental Rights and Health Care Freedom

The Ohio Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Moe v. Yost*, where two transgender youth and their parents are challenging the state's ban on gender-affirming care for minors. The plaintiffs argue House Bill 68—which forbids puberty blockers and hormone therapy for trans kids—violates parents' fundamental rights to make medical decisions and Ohio's Health Care Freedom Amendment. While the trial court upheld the ban, an appellate court reversed, ruling it unconstitutional. During oral arguments, justices showed significant interest in parental rights implications, with one asking within seconds whether the state's position means "parents have no rights in this." The case highlights the increasingly prominent role of state courts and constitutions in expanding trans rights after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Tennessee's similar ban in *U.S. v. Skrmetti*. A decision is pending.

[Read more from Jessie Hill for State Court Report here.](#)

RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Physicians for Reproductive Health – Gender Inclusive Language Quick Start Guide

The movement for reproductive justice must be gender inclusive! Check out the Physicians for Reproductive Health's new quick start guide on gender inclusive language. This tool is intended to introduce health care providers, policymakers, journalists, and advocates interested in adopting a stronger praxis for gender-inclusive language when talking about sexual and reproductive health care.

[Access the Quick Start Guide here.](#)

The Coms Project – Responding to Attacks on Fertility Care

The Coms Project's new values-based messaging guidance highlights the similarity between efforts to regulate and restrict abortion and fertility care, and the true aim of these efforts: to control people's bodies and lives. "While not exhaustive, this values-based message guidance offers messaging on the importance of access to fertility care and how attacks on this care relate to attacks on abortion care."

[Access the guidance here.](#) (Note: if you don't already have one, you will need to make an account to access Coms Project resources. It's very worth it, they are amazing.)

Public Religion Research Institute – Mapping Abortion Views Across the 50 States: Insights from PRRI's 2025 America Values Atlas

Throughout 2025, PRRI interviewed more than 22,000 adults as part of its American Values Atlas, providing an in-depth analysis of the demographic, religious, and political factors shaping Americans' views on the legality of abortion, including the profiles of those who support and oppose abortion's legality. There is a TON of fascinating data in this report, and it breaks down findings by state, religion, political party, and age. Topline: Six in ten Americans (61%) say abortion should be legal in most or all cases; in contrast, 36% of Americans say abortion should be illegal in most or all cases. Just 8% of Americans say abortion should be illegal in all cases.

[Access the report here](#), and a [recording of a webinar on the report findings here](#).

National Partnership for Women and Families – Putting Patients at Risk: Extremist Attacks on Emergency Abortion Care

The National Partnership for Women & Families' new report documents how state abortion bans, the Trump administration's revocation of Biden-era EMTALA protections, and hospital closures following the One Big Beautiful Bill Act are collectively denying pregnant people life-saving emergency abortion care across the United States. The report highlights that these barriers disproportionately harm Black women (who are 3.5 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women) and rural communities, with 131 rural hospitals with labor and delivery units at risk of closure or severe service cutbacks due to Medicaid cuts. The report calls on state and federal lawmakers to strengthen EMTALA enforcement and pass legislation protecting emergency abortion access to address the interconnected maternal health crisis.

[Access the report here.](#)

EVENTS

Abortion Fund of Maryland – Fund-A-Thon Finale

Thursday, May 14 at 6PM

Baltimore Streetcar Museum, 1901 Falls Rd, Baltimore, MD 21211, USA

[Tickets from \\$60](#)

Support Abortion Fund of Maryland's annual Fund-A-Thon! "Join us for our Fund-a-Thon Finale at the Baltimore Streetcar Museum! We're throwing a big ol' party to celebrate our hard work and collective power."

What to expect: 🚊 Unlimited rides on a historic streetcar! 🌐 DJ Set from Pangelica of GWL PWR 🎸 Streetcar Concert with the Katie Bowers Band 🍷 Special pop-up from Cocina Luchadoras 🍹 Open Bar included with ticket, with non-alcoholic and gluten-free options ✨ Lawn Games 🎟 Raffle Prizes 📷 Photobooth... and more!

Montgomery County LGBTQ+ Advisory Board – Montgomery County LGBTQ+ Town Hall

Wednesday, May 20th from 6:30-8:30pm

In person at the Pride Center in Bethesda (4805 Edgemoor Lane), or virtual on Zoom

[RSVP here](#) – as part of your registration, you'll be asked if and how you'd like to speak at the Town Hall.

Hosted by the Montgomery County LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, this public forum is an opportunity to share your stories, speak to County leadership about the issues that matter to you, and share feedback on the services available in Montgomery County.

You can choose to attend this event in-person at the Pride Center in Bethesda (4805 Edgemoor Lane) or virtually on Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent to registrants that contact the County LGBTQ+ Liaison, Dr. Amena Johnson, ahead of the event date: Amena.Johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov.

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

Email alice@advancemaryland.org.

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