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OPINION

# Texas has made abortion riskier

State legislations has not made abortion safer, but rather has subjected women to substandard healthcare practices or increased personal costs because the few remaining clinics are burdened by over-regulation.



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FILE -- Demonstrations outside the Supreme Court in Washington as a challenge to Texas state regulations regarding abortion clinics was heard, June 27, 2016. In a rule finalized on Nov. 28, Texas has required that abortion service providers pay for the cremation or burial of fetal remains -- a latest attempt to make it harder for them to remain in business. (Photo by Al Drago/The New York Times) (File Photo / The New York Times)



By Robin Wallace|Contributor  
12:28 PM on Apr 25, 2017

As a family physician dedicated to helping my patients and their families live their healthiest lives, I am saddened and disheartened by our lawmakers' continued assault on the right to safe and accessible health care. Once again, our state Legislature has shown intent to criminalize and further stigmatize abortion. Instead of attacking abortion care, which most Texans believe should be accessible in their communities, I hope our tax dollars can support legislation that restores trust in doctors and allows us to practice medicine in accordance with our professional judgment and training and in the best interest of all Texans.

Here in Texas, we have weathered the storms of baseless legislation that tear away at the fabric of the provider-patient relationship. These laws have not made abortion safer, but rather have subjected women to substandard health care practices or increased personal costs because the few remaining clinics are burdened by overregulation.

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After House Bill 2 passed in 2013, doctors like me were bound to outdated protocols for medication abortion. Effectively, this law forced us to ignore the scientific evidence for safety and efficacy of newer regimens. Every time I had to explain to a woman that the medication option available to her sisters in a neighboring state was not available to her because of her ZIP code, I felt like I was letting her down with second-class care. While our politicians purported to be looking out for her best interests, in reality, they had stripped her of the right to access the best care I knew how to provide.

ADVERTISING



It's time for our elected officials to support and prioritize legislation that moves us forward, not backward. House Bill 262 by state Rep. Donna Howard respects the years

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judgment when providing abortion care to our patients. Bills like HB 745 and 746 by



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Jessica Farrar would eliminate the medically unnecessary waiting periods and stop the state from requiring doctors, including me, to mislead our patients with scientifically inaccurate claims about abortion.

These mandated waiting periods impose countless burdens on women across our state. I often think of my patient, "Miranda," a single mom who drove herself nine hours round-trip from her home in the Houston area for her state-mandated ultrasound visit with me in Dallas, desperate to be back home before it was time to pick her kids up from school. Because of myriad unnecessary regulations that closed more than half the clinics in the state in 2013, Miranda couldn't get an appointment closer to home. She had already had one ultrasound, so she didn't need ours, but state laws forced her to make that trip 24 hours in advance of her procedure, which of course necessitated yet another nine hour round-trip drive just days later.

The three measures by Howard and Farrar respect our patients' rights to make their own decisions based on our input, not based on the political interests of anti-abortion legislators. House Bills 262, 745 and 746 deserve hearings and votes at the Texas Capitol to allow lawmakers and the public to hear the real facts about reproductive health care.





The Legislature has spent hours on bills based on junk science designed to interfere with my relationship with my patients. They can certainly devote a few hours to discuss policies that are based on scientific fact and medical practices and expand and protect access to health care for Texas families.

*Dr. Robin Wallace is medical director of Southwestern Women's Surgery Center in Dallas. Website: [southwesternwomens.com](http://southwesternwomens.com)*



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Robin Wallace|Contributor



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