

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
JUDICIARY
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

July 8, 2022

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your commitment to protect reproductive rights in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The executive order you signed on Friday is an important first step in protecting access to reproductive health care in America. As your administration continues its efforts, I urge you to prioritize equity and specifically address the disproportionate impact the *Dobbs* decision will have on racial minorities and economically disadvantaged families, as well as immigrant and tribal communities.

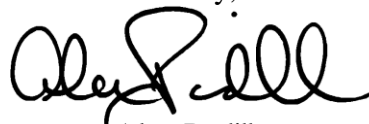
Working to achieve health equity in America has always been critical, but ensuring equitable access to safe abortion care is now essential. A majority of women seeking abortions identify as a racial minority, and an even greater portion of those women are low-income. These marginalized groups already face structural and financial barriers to reproductive care. For example, reports have found that states that have stepped up to serve as safe-havens for people living in restrictive abortion states are experiencing difficulty serving clients who speak languages other than English. In the wake of the *Dobbs* ruling, it is urgent that the federal government ensure women seeking safe abortion care have equitable access to resources and opportunities across the country, in both restrictive abortion states and those maintaining access.

To give an example, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should engage in a public messaging campaign to dispel any false information regarding access to abortion care, and any resources or materials should be disseminated in multiple languages and across numerous platforms to reach the diverse communities represented throughout the country. Additionally, HHS should issue updated guidance that makes clear what options states have to expand their federal health programs to provide reproductive care for immigrant women and girls. California recently expanded its Medicaid program to provide free healthcare to all low-income immigrants. Other states should follow this example with the assistance of the federal government.

In addition, the Department of Homeland Security and HHS must develop policies and protocols to ensure that pregnant women and girls in immigration detention or in Office of Refugee and Resettlement custody are not denied access to reproductive healthcare – including abortion – because they are detained in states where access to abortion is now restricted.

Multiple generations of women have grown up in a society that guaranteed their right to choose whether to have an abortion. Now, however, they are left with fewer options and less bodily autonomy than their parents. It is the federal government's responsibility to respond to this crisis expeditiously, and I urge you to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are protected.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
U.S. Senator