

Achieving Reproductive Justice for Immigrants

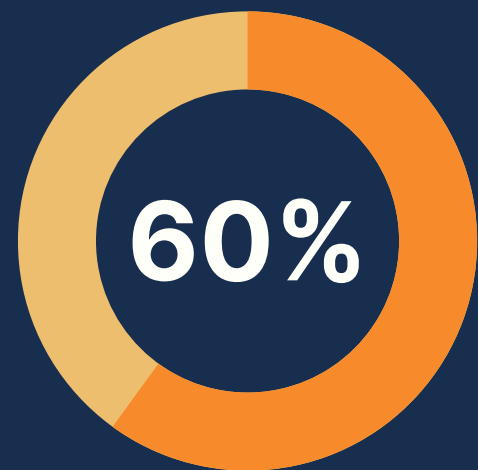
Through the HEAL for Immigrant Families Act and the LIFT the BAR Act

History of Exclusion

For decades, the United States has enacted policies that have prevented immigrants, regardless of their documentation status, from accessing quality health care, including abortion and other essential reproductive health services. **The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 prevented green card holders from accessing Medicaid, CHIP, and other public benefits for five years.** Other immigrants, such as Temporary Protected Status holders and DACA recipients, as well as undocumented immigrants, were almost entirely barred from coverage. Until this year, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) continued restrictions by excluding undocumented immigrants from purchasing health plans on the marketplace.¹

Impact of Exclusions from Reproductive Health Coverage

Barriers to health coverage limit immigrants' ability to obtain contraception, maternal health care, abortions, and other sexual and reproductive health care services. Even for immigrant women who qualify for Medicaid during pregnancy, coverage is often limited to only labor and delivery costs, leaving them unable to afford prenatal care.² **Research also suggests that immigrant women are less likely to receive other critical preventive services, such as Pap tests, hepatitis B vaccinations, and mammograms.**³



of immigrant women of reproductive age **lack health insurance.**⁴

Immigrant women face a **higher risk of cervical cancer**

due to barriers in knowledge and accessing testing.⁵

Only half



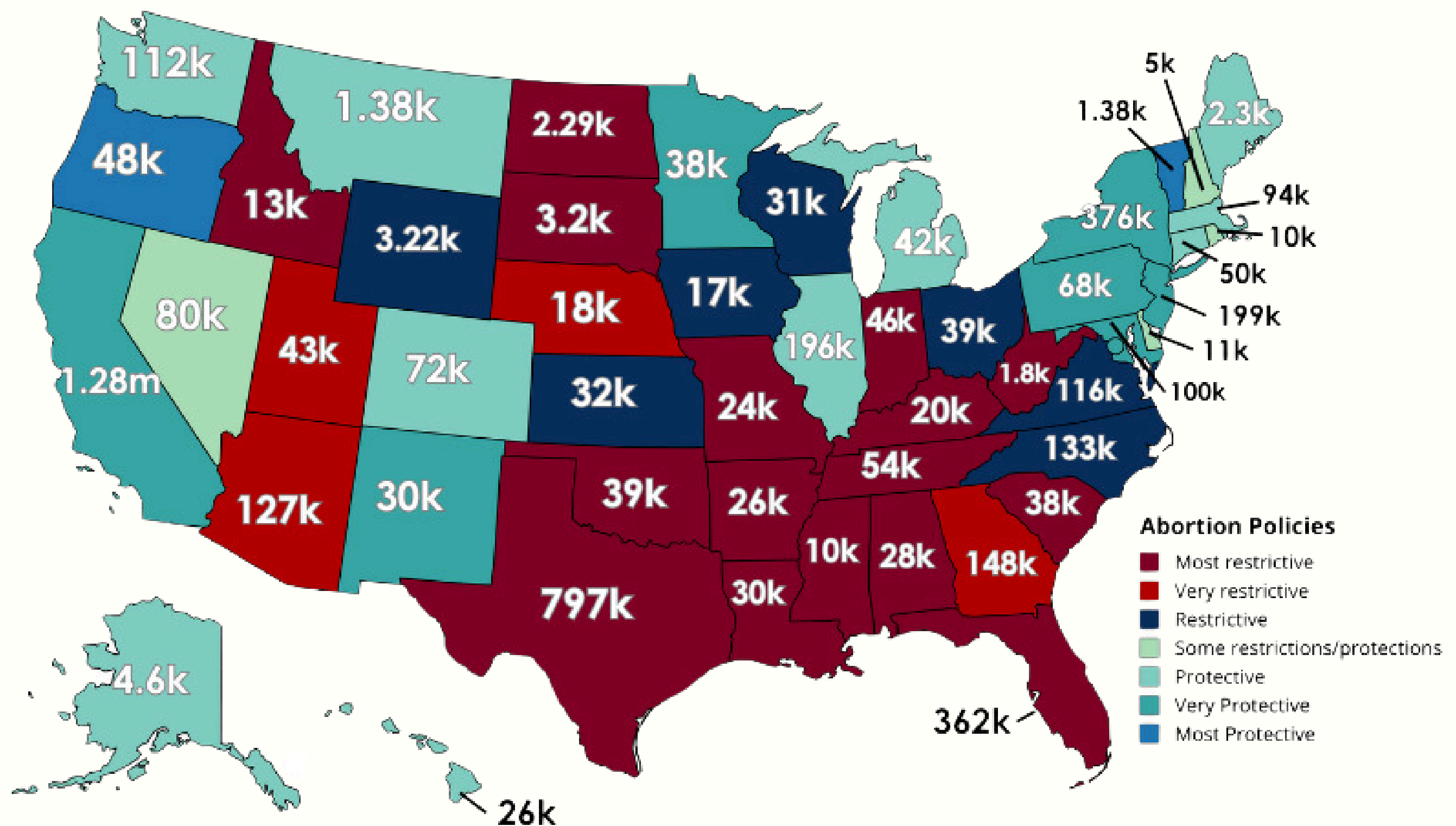
of immigrant women receive contraceptive services or information.⁶

Recent Court Decisions Put Immigrants at Greater Risk

Even before the 2022 Dobbs decision rescinding federal abortion rights, immigrants faced significant barriers to abortion access such as financial constraints, lack of information, and systemic restrictions. The ruling, however, allowed many states that are home to a high number of immigrant and mixed-status families to pass abortion bans. These bans not only restrict access to abortion services but threaten all types of pregnancy and reproductive care.⁷

Undocumented immigrants across the country, particularly in states with restrictive abortion and immigration policies, face the extra fear of having to commute long distances to receive care and risking apprehension by immigration enforcement. The heightened fear of criminalization leads many immigrants to forgo not just reproductive health care but health care of any kind as well as insurance coverage and travel.

Undocumented Female Immigrants and State Abortion Restrictions ⁸



We urge Congress to support policy solutions that remove harmful and unnecessary barriers for immigrants' access to reproductive health care by cosponsoring:

The LIFT the BAR Act (H.R.4170/ S.2038)

- Repeals provisions of PRWORA that restrict lawfully present immigrants' eligibility for federal assistance programs such as Medicaid, CHIP, TANF, and SNAP.
- Redefines "qualified noncitizens," a term used to define eligibility for many federal programs, to include any individual who is lawfully present in the U.S., such as DACA recipients.
- Prevents punitive policies from being adopted to limit immigrant eligibility or deter access to federal benefit programs.

The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act (H.R. 5008 / S.2646)

- Repeals key provisions of PRWORA that restrict lawfully present immigrants' eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP.
- Removes discriminatory Medicare eligibility requirements regarding length of stay in the U.S. for many Lawful Permanent Residents
- Codifies access to ACA marketplace coverage for DACA recipients,
- Allows undocumented immigrants to access health insurance coverage, premium tax credits, and cost-sharing reductions on the ACA marketplace.
- Creates a state plan option to expand Medicaid and CHIP eligibility to undocumented immigrants.

¹ KFF, State Health Coverage for Immigrants and Implications for Health Coverage and Care, May 2024

² Guttmacher Policy Review, Conservatives Are Using the Intersection of Immigration, Health Care and Reproductive Rights Policy to Undermine Them All, April 2020

³ Guttmacher Institute, Immigrant Women's Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Coverage and Care in the United States, November 2018

⁴ Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Immigration Reform

⁵ Ozturk, Nuray Yasemin, Syeda Zakia Hossain, Martin Mackey, Shukri Adam, and Patrick Brennan. 2024. "HPV and Cervical Cancer Awareness and Screening Practices among Migrant Women: A Narrative Review" Healthcare 12, no. 7: 709.

⁶ Guttmacher Institute, U.S. Women's Use of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: Trends, Sources of Care and Factors Associated with Use, 1995–2010, May 2013

⁷ Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Crisis: Abortion in the United States After Dobbs, April 2023

⁸ Migration Policy Institute, Unauthorized Immigrant Population Profiles, 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program-data-hub/unauthorized-immigrant-population-profiles>