

# Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health: State GOP Leaders Continue Long History of Restricting & Regulating Care

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Madison — As the Assembly Health Committee debates yet another bill that inserts politics into the personal decision making and health care needs of women today, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) highlights a timeline that depicts a long history of malicious and misguided legislative interference to women's reproductive health care.

"The obsession with restricting access and dictating care is not new and has taken a cumulative toll on the lives of women and families in our state," said WAWH Executive Director Sara Finger. "Rather than focus on proactive policies that would improve access to care and health outcomes for Wisconsin women and families our elected leaders insist on pushing politically motivated proposals that are in conflict with widely accepted medical standards and evidence."

The bill up for debate today in the Assembly Health Committee (AB 128) would prohibit public employee insurance plans from covering the costs of abortions, with very limited exceptions. While the ramifications of the bill are not entirely clear, should this bill pass, it is possible that women who are public employees who find themselves in an already unfortunate medical situation will not only face making a difficult decision about whether to terminate what is often a wanted pregnancy, but will also be confronted with the harsh financial reality that they may not be able to choose to end that pregnancy without enduring severe financial hardship.

“Simply reducing access to abortion does nothing to address these economic realities faced by almost every family in Wisconsin,” notes Finger. “If reducing the number of abortions in Wisconsin is truly a goal in our state, we humbly suggest that the Legislature shift its focus from implementing every fathomable obstacle to accessing abortion care and begin to prioritize public policies that have actually demonstrated success in preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing abortion rates.”

Study after study indicates that increasing women’s access to contraception and family planning services significantly reduces the occurrence of unintended pregnancies and abortion rates. Despite this overwhelming evidence, for the past couple decades, legislators have virtually ignored proactive public policies that would actually increase women’s access to family planning services and have actually worked to undermine the existing family planning services infrastructure in Wisconsin.

“It’s beyond shameful to see this history of prioritizing politicized regulations over evidence-based care and prevention in our state,” Finger adds. “Much to the surprise of many Wisconsinites, our once progressive state is now competing with states like Texas as the most hostile to women’s health and rights.”