

'There are two Americas': Pregnancy-related deaths up to three times more likely in states with abortion bans

January 27 2023, by Christine Fernando



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Women in states with abortions bans are up to three times more likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth or soon after giving birth, according to a

new report.

The report, published last week by the nonprofit research organization the Gender Equity Policy Institute, also found that states with abortion bans have higher [infant mortality rates](#) and [teen pregnancy rates](#).

"The data is clear," researchers wrote. "For women, girls, and gender diverse people who can become pregnant, there are two Americas."

The findings align closely with a December study by the Commonwealth Fund, an independent health care research foundation, that found maternal death rates in 2020 were 62% higher in states with abortion bans or restrictions compared to states where abortion is accessible.

"We hope this report helps raise the alarm about the harrowing realities abortion bans and the denial of reproductive and sexual healthcare has on people's lives," Chantel Johnson, senior director of external affairs at GEPI, said in a statement.

Other report findings: Infant mortality, teen pregnancy

- Babies born in states with abortion bans after the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* were 30% more likely to die in their first month of life.
- Twice as many [single mothers](#) were uninsured in banned states, compared to supportive states.
- Teen birth rates were twice as high in banned states.
- While fewer than 1 in 10 people live in Texas, 1 in 7 of all [maternal deaths](#) took place in the state, which has among the most limited abortion access in the country.

"This is the beginning of the post-Roe world, and the only way to stop

these worrying trends from continuing is to ensure everyone has access to the care they need—including abortion." Mini Timmaraju, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said in a statement about the report.

Maternal, infant mortality on the rise; Racial disparities

Maternal mortality rates have been on the rise as a whole in the U.S., which has among the worst rates for [high-income countries](#). In 2021, maternal mortality in the U.S. was 89% higher than in 2018, according to the report.

There are also significant racial disparities in maternal and [infant mortality](#) rates, the report said.

Native American women had the highest [maternal mortality rates](#) in 2021—4.5 times that of white mothers. In 2021, the maternal mortality rate among Black mothers was 2.6 times the rate of white mothers.

Similarly, Black newborns died at 2.3 times the rate of white newborns, and Native American newborns died at 1.3 times the rate of white newborns.

A growing body of research has pointed to systemic racism and implicit bias as factors in these disparities, the report said.

"Nationwide, Black and Native American women already face disproportionately higher [maternal mortality](#) rates and Latinas are more likely than other women to be uninsured," the report said. "Therefore, for Black, Latina, and Native American women who live in states hostile to reproductive freedom, the health dangers will be compounded."

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Citation: 'There are two Americas': Pregnancy-related deaths up to three times more likely in states with abortion bans (2023, January 27) retrieved 28 December 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-americas-pregnancy-related-deaths-states-abortion.html>

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