

Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast et al. v. Rebekah Gee
Case Background

Louisiana ranks among the worst states in the country for abortion access and is the [third poorest](#) state in the nation. The need for reproductive health care including safe, legal abortion is dire. Statewide, [only three health centers](#) offer safe, legal abortion for nearly [one million women](#) of reproductive age.

In the New Orleans area alone, [more than 20 percent](#) of women of reproductive age (about 80,000 women) live at or below the federal poverty line. Many of them are unable to access safe, legal abortion because of financial barriers like the cost of the procedure, loss of income from time off work, and costs for child care or travel. (A trip they must make twice under [state law](#).) Experts estimate that, when financial assistance is not available, [18-37 percent](#) of patients with low incomes are unable to access abortion at all because they simply cannot afford it. In New Orleans, only [5 percent](#) of patients in poverty can access charitable assistance to help pay for the abortion care they need.

Due to racism and other structural barriers that have contributed to wealth and income inequality, Black women and Latinas in Louisiana are disproportionately likely to be poor or have low incomes. They are disproportionately impacted by these barriers to abortion, and their financial restrictions can compound with factors like being a single mother or being the sole breadwinner — adding to the burdens of navigating a broken health care landscape.

For several years, Planned Parenthood has been working to expand access to safe, legal abortions at our health center in New Orleans, along with financial assistance to women who need it. In addition, we will be able to offer extended hours and weekend appointments to accommodate those who cannot afford to take time away from work or other everyday responsibilities like caring for family members.

Yet, politicians in the state of Louisiana have placed roadblock after roadblock to restrict access to abortion in the state and prevent Planned Parenthood from offering this care. Since 2011, the state has passed [20 restrictions](#) on safe, legal abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The state has also taken action time and again to prevent Planned Parenthood from obtaining a license to provide safe, legal abortion — starting in 2012, with the passage of a medically unnecessary “facility need review” requirement, and most recently, with its deliberate refusal to approve Planned Parenthood’s pending license application to provide safe, legal abortion, which was filed [nearly 17 months ago](#). (See timeline below for details.)

Every person deserves the right and opportunity to control their life at the most basic level, including whether and when to become a parent. That’s why Planned Parenthood is fighting in court on behalf of Louisianans and every person’s right to access safe, legal abortion.

Timeline

- **August 2012** - On top of rigorous regulations already in place, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) under the Jindal administration created a new regulation to prohibit any new abortion provider from opening in Louisiana unless the provider applies for and is granted an FNR (facility need review) by the LDH.
- **2014** - The Louisiana Legislature passed Texas-style admitting privileges and ambulatory surgical center requirements designed to shut down health centers that provide safe, legal abortion. (Currently enjoined.)
- **2015** - Then-Gov. Bobby Jindal issued an executive order to bar care at Planned Parenthood through Medicaid. (Currently enjoined.)
- **June 2015** - In response to a certain legal challenge from Planned Parenthood, LDH rescinded the FNR requirement for abortion facilities.
- **2016** - The Louisiana Legislature passed seven new medically unnecessary restrictions on abortion, which are now all being challenged in the courts, including a measure to bar care at Planned Parenthood through Medicaid.
- **June 2016** - PPGC's new state-of-the-art health center in New Orleans opened and began providing preventive care.
- **September 2016** - PPCfC filed its application for an abortion license with LDH.
- **November 2016** - LDH requested more information on the application, further delaying the license process.
- **June 2017** - LDH notified Planned Parenthood that it needed to conduct an investigation before it could rule on the license application, further delaying the licensure process. This was LDH's last communication with Planned Parenthood about its license application.
- **February 23, 2018** - PPGC and PPCfC asked a federal district court to issue an injunction to stop LDH from blocking its license to provide safe, legal abortion.

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