

FLORIDA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OPPOSES
15-WEEK ABORTION AND POSSIBLE OVERTURN OF ROE V. WADE
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Abortion rights remain a contentious issue with intersecting concerns for reproductive rights, maternal healthcare, and consideration for the unborn. The federal decision for *Roe v. Wade* (Blackburn & Supreme Court of the United States, 1972) enacted in 1973 authorized individuals to make their own informed decisions about pregnancy termination without excessive government restriction. The projected overturning of this federal decision in favor of state legislation puts more power in the Florida Legislature to restrict the choice of individuals to legally seek an abortion, reducing the time limit almost in half. Although the Florida law permits abortions after the 15th week in cases where medical professionals agree that the fetus is unviable due to abnormalities, or when the health of the mother is at risk, it does not allow protections for conception as a consequence of rape, incest, intimate partner violence, or periods of psychological instability (e.g., mania, psychosis). Transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals also seek abortions and utilize surgical and medication abortions but are often not considered when addressing reproductive rights and abortion (Moseson et al., 2021). The Florida Psychological Association (FPA) stands united with the American Psychological Association and endorses its recent statements about the implications of an [abortion ban](#) on mental health as well as an early call for reaffirming support for [reproductive rights](#).

The shorter time period forces pregnant individuals to carry pregnancies to term, which can exacerbate the traumatic circumstances of conception, and place them at risk for further traumatic experiences through childbirth without adequate time to make this difficult decision in the 15-week time period (Russo, 2014). Individuals are more likely to remain in contact or in relationships with abusive partners due to unwanted pregnancies, placing the adult victim and children at greater risk for violence (Collaborative for Reproductive Equity, 2021). Aiken et al. (2020) identified the most common reasons for seeking abortions as lack of money, wanting to finish school, age, phase of life barriers, illness, and insufficient familial support. The CDC determined in their 2019 Abortion Surveillance survey that nearly 630,000 legal abortions were reported for 2019 (Kortsmit et al., 2019). Adults between the ages of 20 and 29 accounted for the highest percentages of abortions in 2019, but adolescents ages 15 to 19 had the highest ratio of abortions as compared to the number of live births for the age group (Kortsmit et al., 2019). Laws that would force a young adult to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term creates undue stress for them, their family, and the community. In 2020, the teen birth rate was 15.4, continuing the downward trend since 1990 (Osterman, Hamilton, Martin, Driscoll, & Valenzuela, 2022). Becoming a teen parent often reduces the adolescent's educational attainment, reduces their earning potential, make them more likely to need public assistance, and have more parenting challenges (Diaz & Fiel, 2016; Hodgkinson, Beers, Southammakosane, & Lewin, 2014; Jacobs & Mollborn, 2012; Kane, Philip-Morgan, Harris, & Guilkey, 2013; Mollborn, 2017).

Desperate individuals may resort to illegal means of inducing or obtaining an abortion, which can cause undue harm to the individual or place them in risky situations. For example, within a 10 month period, more than 6,000 U.S. residents requested self-managed medication (SMM) to induce abortion through the Women on Web (WoW) telemedicine website. Seventy-one per cent of requests were initiated from states with hostile abortion laws (Aiken et al., 2020).

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