

'Mass uncertainty:' America's abortion landscape in the post-Dobbs era

Featuring Cat Duffy



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This time on Code WACK!

It's been one year now since the Supreme Court overturned the landmark Roe vs. Wade ruling, and reversed five decades of legal precedent. The Dobbs v Jackson decision returned the power to regulate abortion to individual states.

What has that meant for abortion access in America?

To find out, we spoke to **Cat Duffy**, a policy analyst in the **National Health Law Program's** Washington, DC office. She holds a doctorate and works on reproductive and sexual healthcare access and services with a particular focus on abortion coverage and access.

WE DISCUSS

Since the 2022 Dobbs ruling, how has the legal landscape changed when it comes to abortion access?

"...there's been a lot of change over the last year... 14 states have banned either all or nearly all abortion...In the first hundred days after Dobbs, over 60 health centers in 15 different states had to shut down as a result of abortion bans going into effect.... [and] we have seen a continuation in attacks in the 2023 legislative sessions – in particular the sort of marked interest on medication abortion, which is also sort of being replicated in litigation that I'm pretty sure we're going to talk about later." – **Cat Duffy**

Is it all bad news?

"...it's not all bad.The back half of 2022 saw significant legislative activity in states that support reproductive freedom. Overall in 2022, 18 states adopted over 75 different proactive provisions, which is markedly more than the last couple years that we've seen in terms of proactive activity.

And I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to mark the results of the midterm elections ... And I think we've seen a lot of positive proactive activity in the 2023 session and hope to see more before the year's done. – **Cat Duffy**

What about the impact on individuals seeking abortions in states that have banned or limited them?

“...the bottom line is that fewer people are able to access the care that they need and for many accessing care if they're able to, it's now sizeably more expensive and arduous than it was prior to Dobbs, largely due to like a massive increase in the distances that people have to travel.” – **Cat Duffy**

Helpful Links

[National Health Law Program](#)

[Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization](#), *Ballotpedia*

[#WeCount](#), *Society of Family Planning*

[What Happens When Federal Laws to Provide Emergency Care Clash with State Abortion Laws?](#) *The Commonwealth Fund*

[For Many Rural Californians, Abortion Isn't Accessible. Here's What Can Be Done](#), *California Health Report*

[End of Roe v. Wade Makes California an Abortion Destination](#), *Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties*

[With telehealth abortion, doctors have to learn to trust and empower patients](#), *NPR*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Cat Duffy Biography

Cat Duffy, PhD, is a Policy Analyst in the National Health Law Program's Washington, DC office. She works on reproductive and sexual health care access and services, with a particular focus on abortion coverage and access.

Before joining NHeLP, Cat was the Associate Director of Policy and Research at The Hub Project, where she managed the research supporting accountability campaigns on issues such as prescription drug prices, health care coverage, and abortion access. Previously, Cat was a State Policy Manager at Planned Parenthood Federation of America for several years, where she worked on several issues including abortion, telehealth, sex education, and gender-affirming health care access. In this role, she primarily focused on abortion policy, supporting the creation of advocacy strategies to protect and expand abortion access across the country.

Cat Duffy completed her PhD at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Her research agenda focused on health care policy, including issues related to the Affordable Care Act, contraceptive coverage, and Medicaid. Her dissertation was a content analysis of media coverage of the 2017 efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Cat was a COMPASS Fellow during her time at USC, where she spent a summer working at the Department of Health and Human Services. She also has a MA in Political Communication from Wake Forest University and a BA in International Relations from Michigan State University's James Madison College.

Outside of the office, Cat loves to read (pretty much anything but there's a special place in her heart for romance and fantasy) and is an avid fan of Survivor.

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