

Criminalizing Choice: The Deadly Cost of Denying Abortion

Jennie Wetter

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This time on Code WACK!

How is America doing on sexual and reproductive health nearly three years after the Dobbs decision overturned Roe v. Wade? ***What are the real-life human rights consequences of abortion bans now sweeping across many states?***

To unpack the fallout, we spoke with **Jennie Wetter**, Director of the **rePROs Fight Back initiative** at [The Population Institute](#), where she champions sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice every day. Jennie also hosts the [rePros Fight Back Podcast](#), offering deep dives into abortion access, birth control, sex ed, LGBTQ+ rights, and more.

This is part one of a powerful two-part series with Jennie.

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WE DISCUSS

[The Population Institute](#), an international non-profit promoting reproductive freedom and sponsor of your podcast [rePROS Fight Back](#), just released its [13th annual report card](#) on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States. The U.S. got an F — for the sixth year in a row. Talk about that.

"... we started doing the report card in 2012...Then we had three A's and nine F's in that first year. And if I remember correctly, I think the U.S. had a C or a C minus.

"So you can see like a lot has changed over the 13 years of the report card.

"And you know, and also important to note that *the U.S. has had a failing grade for six years*. Roe was only overturned three years ago, so we were failing when it comes to sexual and reproductive health, even before the loss of abortion rights." – **Jennie Wetter**

[Why was the U.S. failing on sexual and reproductive health even before Roe was overturned?](#)

"... at the national level ... there were lots of attacks on [Title X](#) depending on who was in office. So we would see public administrations attacking who could get Title X funding or trying to cut Title X funding.

"And that is funding for family planning programs for people with low incomes. [Planned Parenthood](#) is ... a Title X family planning provider. It's a really important program that makes sure that people can get the reproductive health services they need. And so that was a big part of it.

"... But also we were just seeing this wave of restrictions on abortion that was really impacting your ability to access abortion kind of nationwide....

"... then this year, actually the last two years, we started adding in gender-affirming care for young people. And so you have seen this huge attack on young people's ability to access best practice, gender-affirming care. That has also contributed to the overall U.S. failing grade in the last two years. – **Jennie Wetter**

So why are bodily autonomy and the freedom to access sexual and reproductive health so critical for a functioning democracy?

"... your ability to decide what you're doing with your body impacts so many things. If you can't decide when or if you are gonna get pregnant, it makes it hard to plan to go to college. It makes it hard to plan out your career if you don't know if you're gonna be pregnant.

"It's hard to make those longer term plans and that impacts your economic security. And same with abortion, right? If you have an unplanned pregnancy that can derail your education or your job prospects, you may not feel that you're in an economic position to have kids at that time.

"So again, [reproductive freedom] impacts your political participation because you can't make those economic decisions for your future if you don't have control over your body." – **Jennie Wetter**

Helpful Links

[The Population Institute](#)

[The State of Reproductive Health and Rights, a 50-State Report Card](#)
The Population Institute

[rePros Fight Back](#) Podcast, *The Population Institute*

[The Impact of Medicaid and Title X on Planned Parenthood](#), *KFF*

[What is Title X? An Explainer](#), *Physicians for Reproductive Health*

[What is gender-affirming care? Your questions answered](#), *Association of American Medical Colleges*

Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#)

Guest Biography - Jennie Wetter

Jennie Wetter (she/her/hers) is the Director of the rePROs Fight Back initiative at the Population Institute, where she fights every day for reproductive health and rights.

Originally from Wisconsin, she has lived in Washington D.C for the last 20 years. She received her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her M.A. from the American University's School for International Service.

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