

Testimony of Madysyn Anderson
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
“The Assault on Women’s Freedoms: How Abortion Bans Have Created a Health
Care Nightmare Across America”
June 4, 2024

Chair Sanders, Senator Murray, Ranking Member Cassidy, Members of the Committee:

My name is Mady Anderson, and I live in Houston, Texas.

Two years ago, during my senior year at the University of Houston, I had just come out of a two-year relationship. After a couple weeks of nausea and not sleeping or eating, I took a pregnancy test.

I called my friends to bring me more tests because I was in disbelief. At one point I had five positive tests in front of me.

I was pregnant.

This was just two weeks after Texas’s abortion ban, known as S.B. 8, went into effect, banning abortion after six weeks.

I knew almost immediately that abortion was the right decision for me.

I called and got an appointment for the following week at my local Planned Parenthood, five minutes away. I thought I was early enough to be able to get my abortion that week. But at my appointment my pregnancy measured at 11 weeks.

I was shocked. I couldn’t get an abortion in Texas.

I called 20 different clinics after that first visit.

Yes, you heard correct. 20.

I called surrounding states and even as far as the Dakotas; no one could see me right away. The earliest I could be seen was two weeks later, at Jackson Women's Health Organization in Mississippi.

This was before the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* decision that would take away the federal constitutional right to abortion. Before 20 more states would ban abortion. Before wait times in states without bans grew longer and longer.

My dad took off from work, and we drove a total of 720 miles roundtrip, and spent 13 hours on the road. We spent five hours in a hotel trying to sleep, before going to my first appointment — just to turn right around and head back home.

And here's the thing: Because of medically unnecessary restrictions on abortion care in Mississippi, I would have to make the trip all over again. The state, essentially, put patients in a time-out because they don't trust people to know what is best for our own health and lives. When I got this news, I was angry, sleep-deprived, and starving — and as certain as I ever was that I wanted an abortion. That certainty never faltered.

The following week my mom was able to find us affordable tickets, and we flew back to Jackson. We started our day at 7 a.m. for my 1:30 p.m. appointment. After my procedure, I waited in the recovery room for about 20 mins, before hopping in a car to make my flight back home.

I want to talk for a moment about money. As a college student who took out multiple student loans, I was counting every penny.

- I had to pay for the appointment in Houston.
- Then gas and hotel for the first trip to Mississippi.
- Then the first appointment in Mississippi.
- Then plane tickets for the second trip to Mississippi.
- Then the abortion itself.
- Then I missed 20 hours of work.
- And 20 hours of my mandatory internship program.

- The total? \$2,850.

There is no dollar value I can put on the stress of managing all of this. The despair of having to go to such lengths for basic, safe health care that was legal just weeks before I needed it. The gut-wrenching reality of having to disclose this deeply personal thing that should be private to professors, my boss, and anyone else in a position of authority over me for fear of not only losing my job but also failing out of all my classes due to all the classes and assignments I missed.

I felt so much anger that politicians in Austin thought they had the right to make this decision for me.

I am one of thousands of people who have now gone through this. Every day, every month we go without a federal right to abortion, there will be more of us. More savings accounts drained, more classes and shifts missed, more choices about which bill to skip paying.

If I had found out I was pregnant last year or last month, Jackson Women's Health wouldn't have been there for me. The people who cared for me that day cannot care for abortion patients in Mississippi. I would have had to go to New Mexico, Kansas, or as far as Illinois.

When we talk about abortion, it's easy to get stuck talking in theoreticals.

But I am a real person.

The lives of abortion patients are not theoretical. People will continue to get pregnant when we don't want to be. We will always need abortions.

There is simply no place for politicians to decide for us.

Thank you for inviting me here today and letting me share my story.