

SANCTUARY CITY FOR THE UNBORN ORDINANCES

ACLU Illinois



Illinois law protects and guarantees every person's ability to make their reproductive health care decisions without governmental interference. This law applies across the state, in all communities.

Some Illinois cities have considered ordinances declaring the community a "sanctuary city for the unborn" or seeking to enforce local penalties for providing or helping someone access reproductive health care.

Among other things these ordinances can:

- Try to restrict access to abortion for residents and people in surrounding communities
- Attempt to restrict availability of medication necessary for abortion care
- Create special regulations aimed at blocking abortion clinics from functioning in the community
- Establish special rights for the "unborn" contrary to Illinois law

These restrictions are clearly illegal under the Illinois law. Illinois lawmakers passed the Illinois Reproductive Health Act to be clear that, no matter where in Illinois you live, you have the fundamental right to make decisions about your own reproductive health care, including abortion. **Abortion is a right in Illinois. Communities cannot pass ordinances infringing on these protections.**

Steps you can take:

- Contact the ACLU of Illinois. We want to know where you are seeing attempts to limit reproductive rights across Illinois. And we may be able to help you and others you recruit to fight back against any efforts to infringe on reproductive rights.
- Attend a public meeting to show your support of reproductive rights, whether by preparing your own remarks, standing in solidarity with those who do, making signs, or by otherwise showing your support in a peaceful and respectful way.
- Write emails, make calls, or speak directly to your local officials.
- Write an op-ed or letter to the editor in your local paper.
- Activate people to take action along with you.

Talking points you can use:

- Illinois law guarantees the right of everyone in the state to make decisions about their reproductive health without interference from the state or local government.
- The Illinois Reproductive Health Act secures the fundamental right to make autonomous decisions about one's own reproductive health, including the fundamental right to use or refuse reproductive health care, including abortion.
- Every community in Illinois is bound by this state law; local governments cannot create exemptions for themselves to enforce policies that are counter to the state law.
- Adopting or enforcing policies that run counter to the Reproductive Health Act is a violation of Illinois law and opens up our community to lawsuits, lengthy litigation and could expose the local community to expensive legal fees or penalties.
- Assessing and controlling the reproductive rights of the city's residents should not be the job of city council.
- The city council should be focusing on measures to create an environment that fosters community, welcomes new residents, and encourages young residents to remain in the community.
- This ordinance does not make our community safer, improve our schools, pave our roads or increase access to the services that build us up, all things this city council could be considering instead. Attempts to restrict health care will limit health care professionals who want to work in this community.
- Trying to restrict reproductive access in this community will disproportionately affect low income residents who cannot travel to receive health care.

Find more information and resources at www.aclu-il.org/SanctuaryCity