

Tampa Bay Abortion Fund Builds Capacity as 15-Week Abortion Ban Becomes Law

TBAF will assist people in the Tampa Bay area seeking abortions outside of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TAMPA, FL — April 14, 2022 — Today, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed HB 5 into law, which will ban abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, but Tampa Bay Abortion Fund's critical work carries on. TBAF is fully committed to helping pregnant people in the Tampa Bay area access and pay for abortion care.

"Abortion is essential health care, and though Florida's legislature and governor have made it much more difficult, abortion will still be accessible after HB 5 goes into effect on July 1," says Kris Lawler, Tampa Bay Abortion Fund Board President. "We were previously building capacity to help people from other states seeking abortion in Florida and had hoped our state could remain a haven from the types of cruel and invasive restrictions seen in other Southern states. However, we are now partnering with clinics in abortion-friendly states like Virginia, Maryland, Illinois, New York, New Jersey and the District of Columbia to help pregnant people receive care outside of Florida."

While abortion is still legal in Florida prior to 15 weeks of pregnancy, the new restriction, coupled with the new 24-hour mandated waiting period, places an additional undue barrier on pregnant people in need of abortion care. Many people seeking abortion care already face barriers to access, such as lack of funding, lack of transportation, a lack of child care and a lack of nearby abortion care; as of 2017, approximately [73% of Florida counties had no clinics that provided abortions](#). In addition, Florida law prohibits Medicaid from covering abortions, while 60% of people who have abortions [already have at least one child](#). People seeking abortions will now need to take time off work, arrange funding, transportation and child care for two in-person clinic visits in an even shorter period of time or be forced to go out of state for abortion care.

"Every caller to TBAF is already facing a barrier to care, and HB 5 will only exacerbate those barriers," Lawler says. "Based on our statistics from 2021, we believe at least 25% of our clients will be impacted by a 15-week abortion ban and will need to seek abortion care outside of Florida. We will be here to help them do that."

To assist people who are traveling to receive abortion care, TBAF is working with the National Network of Abortion Funds' [Operation Scale Up](#), serving Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia, and the [Regional Logistics Center](#), created by Planned Parenthood St. Louis Region and the Hope Clinic for Women, in Illinois. TBAF is also partnering with the [Brigid Alliance](#) and the Emergency Assistance Fund to provide logistical and travel support for Tampa Bay-area residents who will be forced to seek abortion care in other states.

TBAF is calling on the Tampa Bay community to help spread the message about abortion options, including [self-managed abortion](#), and continue funding abortion care. To donate, volunteer, host a fundraiser or join the [2022 Fund-a-Thon](#), visit tbafund.com.

ABOUT TAMPA BAY ABORTION FUND:

The Tampa Bay Abortion Fund removes financial and logistical barriers to abortion access. It specifically assists pregnant people needing support seeking abortion at abortion providers in several counties surrounding Tampa Bay. TBAF currently assists callers with appointments at seven local Tampa Bay clinics as well as for Tampa Bay residents receiving out-of-state care at our partner clinics. TBAF is volunteer-run and funds our callers through donations and grants.

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