

ABORTION RESTRICTIONS AND INFANT HEALTH

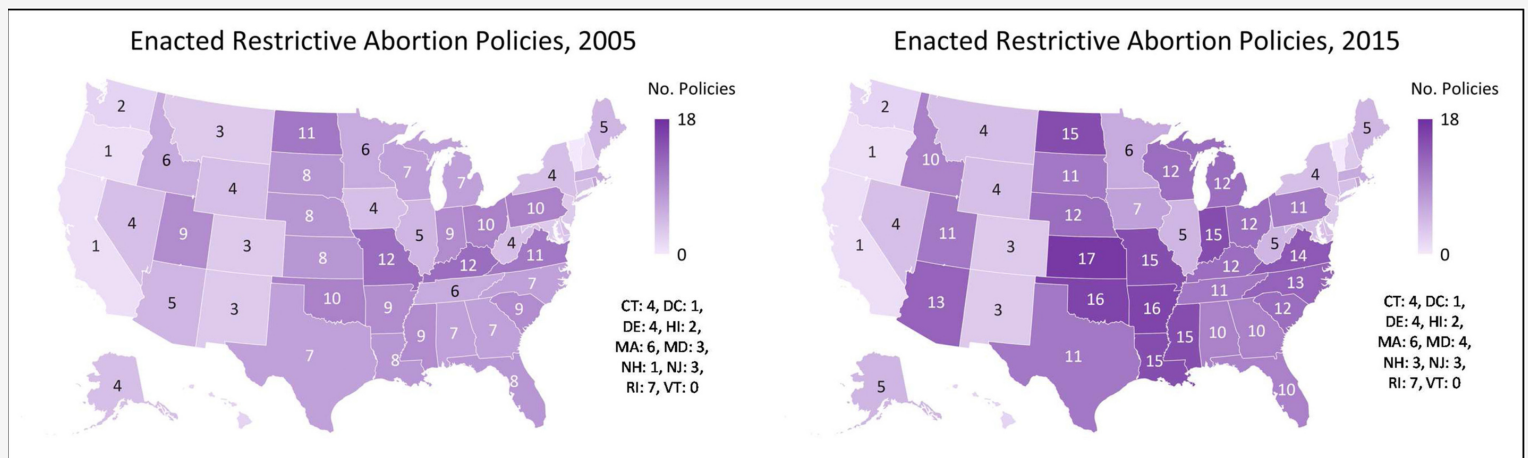
U.S. state lawmakers enacted at least 400 abortion restricting policies within the last decade. Fifty-percent percent of reproductive-age U.S. women live in states that prohibit abortion care. **RISE researchers found that abortion restrictions likely increase the risk of preterm birth (PTB) and low birth weight (LBW) infants.**

“Carrying a pregnancy to term and giving birth are much more dangerous than getting an abortion. So by being pregnant and carrying a pregnancy to term, you’re already increasing your risk for any sort of complication,” said Sara Redd, Ph.D., the study’s lead co-author.

MAIN FINDINGS

States enacting restrictive laws during that period were more likely to see an increase in preterm and low birth weight infants:

- Midwestern states that enacted restrictive policies had a 2% increase in preterm birth.
- Northeastern states had a 15% increase in low birth weight babies.
- Western states had a 2% increase in low birth weight babies.
- Black individuals saw a 3% higher chance of preterm birth than non-Black people in states with more restrictive abortion policies.
- People without a college degree had a 2 to 5% higher chance of having a low birth weight infant than those with a college degree.



PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- Policies reducing abortion access may have negative health implications for infants born in certain regions of the U.S., including increased probabilities of PTB and LBW.
- Given the rising rates of PTB and LBW in the United States, our findings suggest that restrictive abortion policies may be contributing to these trends.

Dr. Redd says advocates and lawmakers can use the evidence to “fight for better policies,” particularly in Midwestern and Southern states.