Passage of Abortion Ban and Women’s Accurate Understanding of Abortion Legality


Of 2,529 women surveyed between October 2018 and June 2019, 26% were unsure whether abortion was illegal in Ohio and an additional 10% believed it to be illegal.

Key Findings
There was an increase over time in the number of women who mistakenly believed that abortion was illegal in Ohio, which corresponded with the period in which a six-week ban on abortion was passed by the Ohio legislature, signed into law, and subsequently blocked by the courts before ever being enacted.

- Even if abortion restrictions never go into effect, the resulting discourse and debate about the legislation could lead some people to mistakenly believe that abortion has become illegal. These misconceptions may cause delays for people seeking abortion care or prompt those who are able to leave the state for care.
- People who are young, Black, unmarried, or of a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to believe abortion is illegal in Ohio. Consequently, people who already experience disparities in accessing abortion care may face an additional barrier.
- Given the frequency with which new abortion restrictions are proposed throughout the United States, uncertainty and misconceptions about abortion legality may be widespread in other states as well.

Public Health Implications

Date of Survey Completion

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<td>Unsere About Abortion Legality</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Believed Abortion was Illegal</td>
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Legislative and Judicial Activity Surrounding the Six-Week Ban

- The Ohio House passes HB 258 on 11/15/18.
- The Ohio Senate passes HB 258 on 12/12/18.
- Governor Kasich vetoes HB 258 on 12/21/18.
- The Ohio Senate fails to override the veto on 12/27/18.
- The Ohio House and Senate pass SB 23 on 4/10/19.
- On 4/11/19, Governor DeWine signs SB 23 into law with an effective date of 7/1/19. *

*A U.S. District Court Judge blocked enactment of SB 23 on 7/3/19, before it went into effect. It is currently enjoined.