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Passage of HB 1904 by Oklahoma Public Health Committee Sets a Dangerous Standard for Oklahoma Women

The bill unnecessarily restricts access to routine and safe reproductive health care, says Trust Women founder and CEO Julie Burkhart

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—The passage of HB 1904 places unnecessary obstacles in the way of Oklahomans seeking reproductive health care that will almost certainly lead to poorer health outcomes for women and families. The bill, which would require that abortions be performed solely by OB-GYNs, is unduly restrictive and not supported by current medical best practices.

“This restriction would harm women by reducing the number of doctors who are able to provide comprehensive abortion care,” said Julie Burkhart, founder and CEO of Trust Women, a reproductive rights organization that also operates health care clinics in Oklahoma City and Wichita, Kansas.

“HB 1904 bill also restricts the provision of abortion care after the first trimester to general hospitals. There is no medically relevant justification for this restriction,” says Ms. Burkhart.

“The purpose of this bill, and the nearly two dozen similar bills also making their way through the Oklahoma Legislature, is simply to make it more difficult for women to access basic medical care,” said Ms. Burkhart. “It will encourage conditions under which women seek unsafe alternatives to abortion, undergo life-threatening pregnancies or have children they cannot afford to care for.”

[A recent study published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine](#) found that “reducing women’s access to family planning and reproductive health services have contributed to rising maternal mortality rates.” Trust Women denounces this bill, and similar legislation aimed at preventing women from receiving the health care they need.

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Julie A. Burkhart is founder and CEO of Trust Women, a reproductive rights organization that opens and operates clinics in underserved areas. Ms. Burkhart is a lifelong activist for choice, worked for seven years with Dr. George Tiller as his spokesperson, and built and directed his political action committee, ProKanDo. After Dr. Tiller’s murder in 2009, at the hands of an anti-choice extremist, she founded Trust Women, and, in 2013, opened the first Trust Women Clinic in Wichita, returning abortion services to the people of South Central Kansas. In 2016, Ms.

Burkhart opened the second Trust Women clinic in Oklahoma City, expanding abortion access in the nation's largest metropolitan area without an abortion provider.

Her work with Trust Women seeks to educate, engage and mobilize constituents in states hostile to abortion rights. She leads the fight for choice in legislatures and courtrooms, and has been at the frontlines of reproductive justice for more than three decades.