

For immediate release: February 22, 2021

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Trust Women Statement on Oklahoma Senate Bill 273

So-called “heartbeat bills” place unnecessary and unscientific roadblocks in between women and their constitutional right to abortion

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—The passage of SB 273 by the Oklahoma Senate Health and Human Services Committee is yet another anti-choice bill aimed at progressively stripping women of the ability to access abortion care without technically removing the right to abortion as granted by the U.S. Constitution. The bill, which prohibits physicians from performing abortions if a fetus’ heartbeat can be detected through ultrasound significantly reduces the window of time that women will be able to seek abortion care, which will increase the likelihood that many women will be forced to carry to term unwanted pregnancies, or pregnancies that endanger their lives.

“Bills such as SB 273 have no other real purpose than to exercise control over women’s bodies,” said Julie A. Burkhart, founder and CEO of Trust Women, a reproductive rights organization that operates a clinic in Oklahoma City. “This is about creating an environment where obtaining access to essential health care is rendered functionally impossible, regardless of where the United States Constitution stands on the matter.”

Multiple studies have shown [maternal health outcomes are worse in states with more severe restrictions on abortion care](#). Additionally, programs like Medicaid expansion can help reduce unintended pregnancies by increasing access to general health care and family planning services, without resorting to measures like SB 273 that would criminalize doctors who perform abortions.

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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.

Trust Women opens clinics in underserved communities so that all women will have access to reproductive health care. Trust Women envisions a day when all people have access to reproductive health care, no matter where they live or their ability to pay.