

House GOP Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations Bills Would Set Women Back Decades

Post-Dobbs, House Republican leaders use every avenue to control and oppress women

SEPTEMBER 2024

Summary

More than two years after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and the constitutional right to an abortion, the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) appropriations bills put forward by House Republican leaders make clear their intent to continue the unrelenting efforts of extremists to erode women's rights and eliminate hard-won protections essential to women's survival. The bills include dangerous proposals that would diminish women's quality of life by zeroing out or severely weakening programs aimed at protecting women's health, reproductive health services, equitable workplaces, and pay. These cuts would be devastating for all women, particularly women of color, and their families. After previously agreeing to a bipartisan, bicameral deal for higher spending levels, House Republicans are demanding severe and drastic cuts at the expense of America's working families.

Labor & Employment

The House Republican funding bill for labor, employment, and civil rights programs would undermine workers' rights and the ability for women to thrive in the workplace. This includes:

- **Eliminating funding for the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau.** Eliminating the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau would cause extensive damage to women's ability to succeed and advance in the workplace nationwide. From its inception more than 100 years ago, the Women's Bureau has played a vital role in highlighting the challenges facing women workers. The Women's Bureau is the only federal agency with the sole mission of focusing on the interests of women in the workforce, providing invaluable research and analysis on women's employment data, and successfully running a number of grantmaking programs to help women advance in the workplace, including the Obama-era paid leave research fund that delivered grants to explore creating or expanding state-level paid family and medical leave programs.

- **Cutting \$25 million for the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division.** This division is responsible for outreach and enforcement of key labor laws like the Family and Medical Leave Act, minimum wage and overtime regulations, protections against workplace retaliation, and the right to express breastmilk at work. These laws are critical to women’s participation in the workplace – especially the lowest paid workers, disproportionately women of color and women overall – and cutting funding for outreach and enforcement would give women and workers of color less recourse for unfair labor practices.
- **Cutting \$35 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).** The EEOC protects Americans from job discrimination and sues companies found to engage in prohibited workplace behavior, like sexual harassment. Without the EEOC, women facing discrimination and harassment in the workplace would have no recourse for holding their employers accountable. In FY 2022, the EEOC recovered more than \$500 million for victims of discrimination. Due to increased costs, even flat funding has been insufficient for the EEOC, which recently announced that all employees will be furloughed once a month to help close a budget shortfall.

Women’s Health

The House Republican funding bill for the Department of Health and Human Services includes drastic cuts and disinvestments in key programs that would harm women’s health and access to care, worsen our nation’s health workforce shortage, and undermine efforts to end health inequities. Furthermore, in the wake of the post-Dobbs deterioration in access to maternal health care in many communities, the House Republican proposal pushes for deeper cuts in programs critical to improving maternal and child health and well-being. This includes:

- **Cutting nearly \$800 million from government programs that fund maternal and child health and improve women’s health care,** including: a cut of \$700 million to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a cut of \$35 million to the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and a cut of \$49 million for the Office on Women’s Health. Close to 60 million women and children benefited from the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant through HRSA in FY21 – 92 percent of all pregnant women and 98 percent of all infants.
- **Drastically cutting key health equity programs** such as a \$49 million cut for the Office of Minority Health, and a \$24 million cut for the Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative.
- **Eliminating funding for multiple programs that support diversity in the health care workforce, including the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), the Centers of Excellence (COE), and the Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD).** Women are a

large share of the health care industry, though women and particularly women of color are underrepresented at the senior levels. Growth in the health care and social assistance sector will account for nearly half (45 percent) of all new jobs over the next decade. In 2021-22, HCOP trained 4,640 students for health careers, more than two-thirds of whom are underrepresented minorities, COE trained 4,027 students, and NDW trained 10,981 students, two-thirds of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Ending all funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**, which supports research to improve health care quality, address inequities, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to primary care and maternity care.
- **Slashing funding for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services by \$798 million.** The agency innovates and improves quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid enrollees nationwide – thirty-one million adult women are enrolled in Medicaid – the majority of adult beneficiaries. Women are also the majority of Medicare beneficiaries.

Reproductive Rights

The House Republican funding bill would further restrict access to abortion and reproductive health services. It reverses decades of longstanding programs and precedent while also undoing efforts to mitigate the impact of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision. These restrictions will impact low-income women and women of color the most, as well as young people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and those living in rural areas. They include:

- **Restricting the federal government’s ability to cover and support abortion care by prohibiting:**
 - Federal dollars from covering abortion care for those who receive health care or health insurance through the U.S. government.
 - The Department of Defense from implementing a rule that allows servicemembers to take leave to travel for abortion care.
 - The Department of Veterans Affairs from implementing a rule that allows the VA to provide abortions in certain circumstances while banning coverage and provision of abortion care except in narrow exceptions. Over 400,000 women veterans live in states that have banned or are likely to ban abortion.
- **Eliminating funding for Title X Family Planning**, which provides high-quality, culturally responsive family planning services to people with low or no incomes and people who are un- or under-insured, and prohibiting Title X health clinics from

providing information on or referrals for abortion. In 2021 Title X served more than 1.6 million people.

- **Eliminating all federal funding for Planned Parenthood**, which provides critical reproductive health services to women across the country, with a particular focus on low-income women who may not be able to afford services elsewhere. In 2022, Planned Parenthood and its affiliates served 2.13 million patients.
- **Eliminating funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program**, which provides comprehensive sex education, while instead funding abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.
- **Blocking Biden Administration executive orders** that would protect access to abortion care following the *Dobbs* decision.
- **Prohibiting funding for postgraduate physician training programs** if a program provides training on abortion care, despite the damaging impacts of the *Dobbs* decision on the reproductive health care workforce.
- **Blocking a proposed rule that prevents the misuse of funds** for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) going to crisis pregnancy centers, which use fear and misinformation to shame pregnant people out of having abortions.

These extreme cuts in the House Republican funding bills would be devastating for women and people of color. They will only exacerbate the chaotic environments too many people across the country now must navigate post-*Dobbs* to access basic health care, ensure healthy pregnancies, find fair workplaces, and make the healthiest and safest decisions for their families. Congress must reject these cuts and instead invest in the programs outlined above so that women and their families have the health and economic security they need to thrive.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

© 2024 National Partnership for Women & Families. All rights reserved.