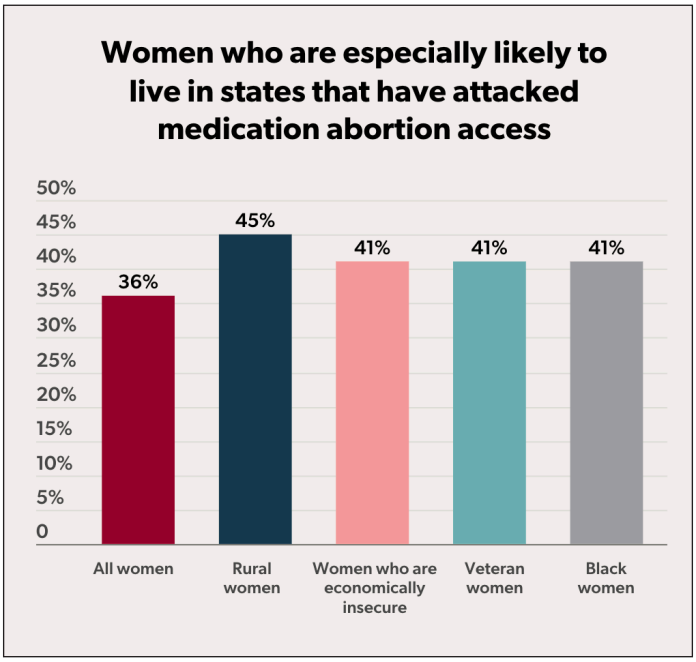
national partnership for women & families

INSIDER

FALL 2026

Banned in Plain Sight: The Quiet War on Abortion Access

Four years after the *Dobbs* decision, the National Partnership's latest report examines anti-abortion extremists' strategy to target access from every angle, from outright bans to clinic closures to attacks on telehealth abortion. The harms reach millions, even in states where abortion is legal and protected. Our analysis captures the disproportionate effects of such policies, showing that more than 23 million women of color of reproductive age now live in states with either restrictions on medication abortion or clinic closures due to Trump's harmful budget bill. For Latina women, that figure climbs to nearly 11 million – roughly two-thirds of all Latina women nationwide. Overall, large numbers of multiracial, immigrant, and AANHPI women are also experiencing the impact, with over 55 percent of women from these groups living in states with Trump-mandated clinic closures. Nearly half of rural women live in states that have cracked down on medication and telehealth abortion access. More than 40 percent of Black women, economically insecure women, and veteran women are in states with these restrictions.

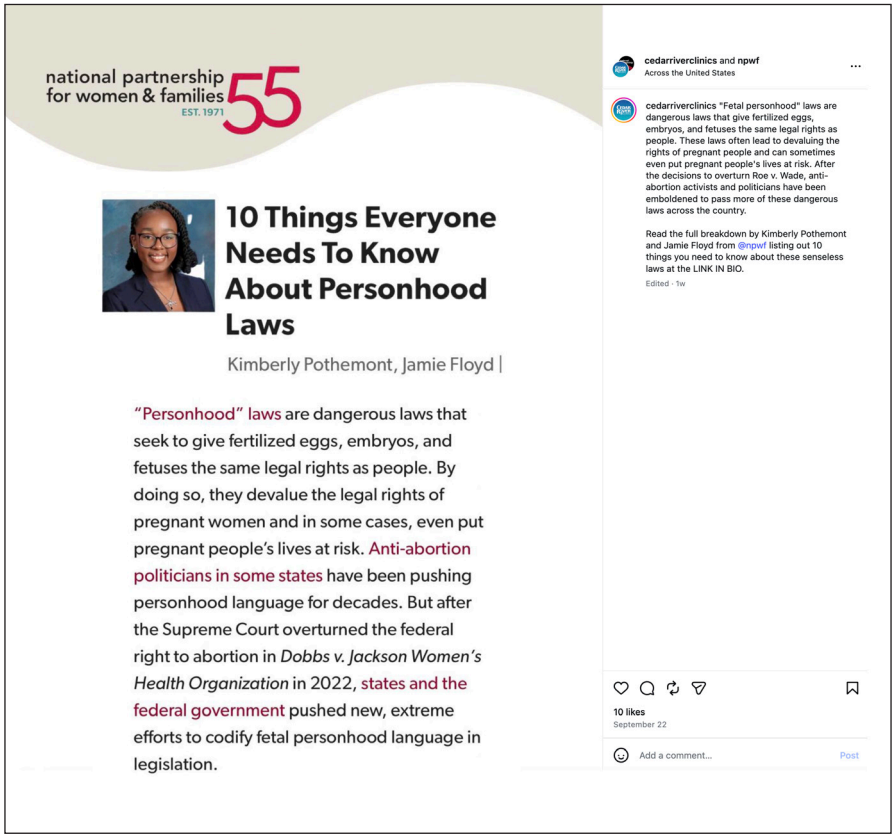


Post the overturning of *Roe* it's become clear that the anti-abortion movement hasn't stopped at outright bans. It's expanded its tactics to include shuttering clinics and choking off telehealth access, reaching communities everywhere. Everyone deserves the freedom to decide what's right for their own body, family, and future – regardless of their race, zip code, or income. The National Partnership will continue to expose these bans for what they are, while fighting to restore and expand abortion access, and standing with the communities hit hardest until reproductive freedom is real for everyone, everywhere. •

Fetal Personhood Laws Puts Pregnant People at Risk

Ever since the Supreme Court irresponsibly reversed *Roe v. Wade* via the *Dobbs* decision, the strategy of granting legal personhood to fetuses has gained new momentum in an ongoing effort to undermine the reproductive rights of women. In order to educate the general public on the real impact of these laws, the National Partnership released a ten-point explainer. At their core, these laws grant fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses legal standing on par with people, with little regard for the pregnant people carrying them.

Anti-abortion lawmakers have pursued this idea for years, and as a result 17 states now have personhood laws, 38 have fetal homicide laws, and 24 have written fetal rights language into their abortion bans. Personhood claims are an intrusive legal tool for controlling women's reproductive decisions and can result in nonconsensual and medically unnecessary interventions such as court-ordered cesarean sections. These laws also cause chaos for those seeking fertility care such as in the case where Alabama clinicians were forced to pause IVF after the state Supreme Court issued a ruling that frozen embryos should be considered children. Due to these laws, roughly four in ten OB-GYNs report that their ability to handle pregnancy emergencies is severely limited, with providers being so wary of legal risk that miscarriage care is often delayed or denied. These laws are now creeping into weird and scary sci-fi territory, by expanding legal personhood to include artificial intelligence allowing companies to dodge accountability for the harms their systems cause.



Fetal personhood laws endanger everyone, not just pregnant people and families trying to build a future, but anyone who depends on the rule of law for individual protection. The National Partnership will keep fighting to expose these harms to the public and to protect reproductive freedom, so that all people have the ability to create the lives they want. •

30 Years of HIPAA, 30 Threats to Health Privacy

This past August marked thirty years since the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was passed into law. While the act's privacy requirement is still important for protecting patients, HIPAA was not built for a world of apps, wearable wellness and fitness devices, or location tracking. These new developments in technology now mean huge amounts of sensitive health data are vulnerable to exposure. The risks for people are heightened given few guardrails on corporate greed and government misuse, a robust market for data brokers to sell health and location data, crippling data breaches and ransomware attacks, as well as generative AI models that are now wreaking havoc. In light of this era, the National Partnership marked the anniversary with a list of 30 threats to health privacy in the digital age. The stakes are especially high for reproductive health, as law enforcement can buy sensitive location and browsing data to sidestep the need for warrants and build cases against women seeking abortion care. The blog also examines the dangerous practices of the current administration to use health data for destructive surveillance purposes. From employing Palantir to build dossiers on Americans, to handing Medicaid data of 79 million people to ICE for deportation tracking, the Trump administration continues to violate privacy protections and exploit the sensitive information of Americans. The National Partnership urges federal lawmakers to pass comprehensive federal data privacy legislation that meets the moment. •

30 Threats to Health Privacy in the Digital Age

HIPAA provides a critical foundation for health privacy, but does not sufficiently respond to modern technologies or safeguard all sensitive data.

1. There is widespread misunderstanding that HIPAA protects all health data, but health information is no longer confined to medical records.

We have a much expanded universe of smartphone and mobile apps, remote monitoring devices, wearables, and other consumer-facing apps that help to collect, share, manage, and use one's health data. Much of the data currently being generated and used for health and care is not protected by HIPAA. Indeed, the same data might or might not have HIPAA protections depending upon who creates or stores it.

2. HIPAA does not go far enough to protect sensitive data from law enforcement access.

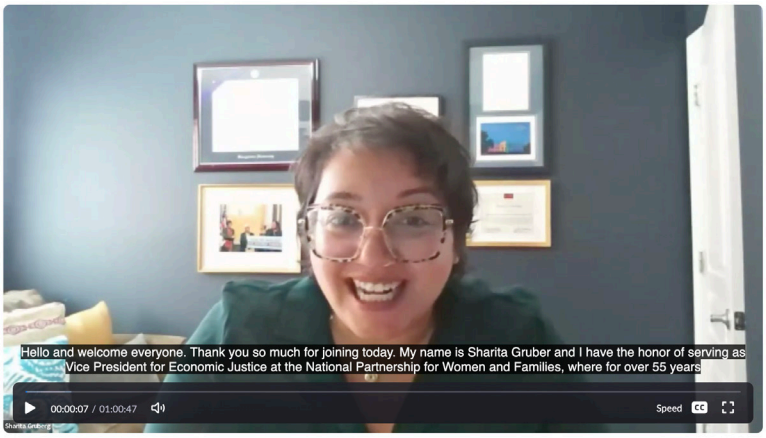
National Leaders Unite, Building the Case for Maternal Health Strategy

On Wednesday, September 16th, the National Partnership for Women & Families and the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) launched the Maternal Health Congressional Strategy Table (MHCST) by hosting a breakfast reception entitled, *Putting Maternal Health on the Table: Prioritizing a National Crisis*. The reception took place during the annual legislative conferences of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and was hosted by Microsoft at their Innovation and Policy Center. The event was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of support and the urgent need to address the nation's maternal health crisis as we head into a new Congress in 2027. The MHCST will serve as a coordinating, non-endorsing body of national non-profit organizations leading federal maternal health policy efforts. The Table is focused on implementing a congressional strategy that both defends against harmful federal policy actions and advances an affirmative vision for maternal health in the United States. Speakers at the event included two of our staunch congressional champions, Congresswomen Lauren Underwood and Emily Randall, as well as Jocelyn Frye, President of the National Partnership, Dr. Jamila Taylor, President and CEO of IWPR, Danyelle Solomon, Senior Director of U.S. Policy and Advocacy at Microsoft, as well as MHCST representatives and event sponsors, Protect Our Care and Center for Reproductive Rights. •



Why Workplace Data Matters: Defending the EEO-1

For 60 years, employers have reported annual workforce demographic data to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) through the EEO-1 form. This tool is one of the agency's most important mechanisms to help identify unreported patterns of discrimination – one which has been used by every administration since 1966. Project 2025 proposed eliminating this data collection and this summer the Trump-nominated chair of the EEOC proposed a rule ending the requirement, in effect reducing visibility into employment practices.



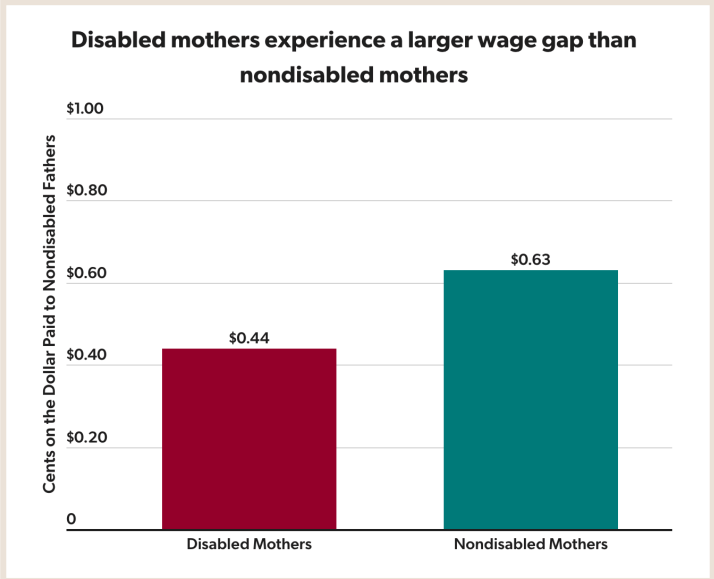
NPWF Vice President for Economic Justice Sharita Gruberg kicks off a webinar with employers on data collection best practices featuring EEOC Chair Charlotte Burrows, July 29, 2026

On August 11, during the public comment period, National Partnership President Jocelyn Frye testified before the Commission in strong opposition. Called on for her expertise, Frye brought the organization's decades of expertise on workplace equity to the table. She argued against the implementation of such a rule; pushing back on the administration's claims that collecting data causes discrimination, and she asserted that looking away won't make discrimination disappear. Frye took apart the proposal's reasoning, pointing out that even the current administration has used EEO-1 data to secure settlements for workers in sex discrimination cases. She warned that eliminating this requirement would only create new hurdles for enforcing civil rights laws. This change would weaken the agency's ability to pursue class actions and systemic cases, and the proposal's incorrect legal reasoning could put other critical federal data collection efforts at risk. Frye closed by urging the Commission to withdraw the proposal and return to its core mission of protecting all workers from discrimination. In addition to providing testimony, the National Partnership led a comment letter on behalf of over 30 gender justice organizations and helped to draft and organize support for a letter from more than 110 House and Senate Democrats urging the EEOC to reverse the proposed rule.

While the proposal sits unresolved, employers are also left with bigger questions about collection practices in the meantime. The National Partnership turned to these employers caught in the middle, hosting a webinar convening business, legal, and civil rights experts to unpack next steps for organizations. The conversation featured the National Partnership's own Sharita Gruberg, Vice President of Economic Justice, and former EEOC Chair Charlotte Burrows. This information was further captured in a recent blog post, clarifying current requirements and reframing the importance of this data collection. The National Partnership believes this workforce data is a compass, giving leaders visibility into the organizations they run. Used well, the collected materials can help answer business questions as well as compliance ones, revealing whether internal systems are working the way employers think they are. The EEO-1 is one piece of a larger workforce data strategy, and the underlying information gathered through internal self-identification remains valuable whether or not the federal government wants the report. The National Partnership advises employers to keep collecting and using the data to bring trust both internally and externally, sharing what it reveals with employees, investors, and prospective hires – because knowing what is happening inside your own organization is simply good business. •

The High Cost of Lost Earnings: The Wage Gap and Disabled Women

As rising costs and federal policymaking decisions strain family budgets, disabled women face deeply rooted barriers to financial stability. The National Partnership recently released a report specifically examining the wage gaps experienced by disabled women. The report was released in advance of Disabled Women's Equal Pay Day, which is marked on October 20. The research finds that disabled women, particularly disabled women of color, are significantly less likely than nondisabled men to be in the labor force. The women who are working earn less, and are often the "last hired, first fired," facing higher rates of job loss and slower re-entry into the workforce. The gaps deepen across identities; for every dollar paid to nondisabled men, disabled Latinas are paid 46 cents, multiracial disabled women 47 cents, and Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and white disabled women 50 cents. Parenthood often penalizes women by lowering mothers' pay while at the same time boosting wages for fathers, thus widening the gap further for disabled mothers, who typically earn just 44 cents for every dollar paid to nondisabled fathers. These dramatic losses total an average of $24,000 lost per year by disabled women workers. These cuts come on top of the added costs borne by disabled people for medical care, assistive technology, and personal care. The National Partnership's data shows that these lost earnings could cover one of the following: nearly two years of child care, two years of tuition at a four-year college, or four and a half years of disability-related expenses.



The report closes with concrete steps for Congress and federal agencies to take across three different areas: enforcing civil rights and inclusion in employment, ensuring community living and autonomy, and addressing the affordability crisis. These tangible recommendations include raising the minimum wage and passing legislation like the Schedules That Work Act, and the Child Care for Working Families Act, which address pay and job quality while expanding opportunities for disabled women workers.

The report also calls for support of policies and agencies that make daily life and work possible, such as a national paid family and medical leave program through the FAMILY Act, as well as sufficient funding for the EEOC, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Finally, the report urges Congress to reverse Medicaid cuts and calls on federal agencies to rebuild the federal capacity disabled women depend on, including restored funding and staff at critical agencies. By pairing the data with clear policy solutions, the National Partnership charts a path toward an economy where disabled women can work, earn, and build security on equal footing. •

The National Partnership's Pay Equity Playbook

The data is in, and it shows that companies that pay fairly out-recruit, out-retain, and out-perform their competitors by far. This new issue brief makes the business case for closing the gender wage gap and lays out concrete steps for getting there. Despite clear research on these benefits, the wage gap itself keeps widening: women in America now earn just 76 cents for every dollar men make, a $14,170 annual shortfall that adds up to nearly $1.9 trillion lost by women every year. This is money that would otherwise be flowing into local communities and family budgets. Research shows that employees who feel underpaid are 15 percent less likely to stick around and 13 percent less engaged, and the resulting turnover can cost employers up to twice an employee's salary to replace them. Consumers are paying attention too, and actively rewarding companies who are reported to have smaller wage gaps. The National Partnership's research lands at a pointed moment. The Trump administration has significantly weakened the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) - the two federal agencies which employers have long relied on for guidance and enforcement. The National Partnership's practical playbook lays out clear pathways for employers ready to lead. The brief encourages businesses to standardize compensation so disparities can't quietly accumulate – factoring in bonuses, commissions, stock, and benefits in addition to the base salary. When it comes to setting the salary itself, companies should set pay based on the skills and experience a role actually requires rather than basing offers off of candidates salary history, which merely carries old inequities forward.



BREAKING NEWS

If the wage gap were closed, all working women could afford

3,400 GALLONS OF GAS

national partnership for women & families EST. 1971 55

Transparency matters; the research shows posting real salary ranges draws more applicants, and more qualified applicants. The playbook encourages employers to run annual pay audits to spot statistically significant disparities and to conduct a self-examination of practices, rather than letting problems sit unresolved. This kind of willful exposure and correction is protected by the EEOC and Supreme Court, who have long held that voluntary auditing is encouraged over letting disparities compound. All of the research shows that the wage gap won't close itself. Leading companies, including Airbnb, Levi's, L'Oréal, Microsoft, and PayPal, are already putting these practices into action. The playbook highlights that eliminating the gap depends on business leadership, and the employers who close it will be the ones who understood, early on, that fair pay and strong business are one and the same. The playbook is ready – now, the Partnership is calling on employers to lead the way forward. •

Martha's Vineyard Recap

The National Partnership returned to Martha's Vineyard this past August, joining the Center for American Progress and the Aspen Institute for *Black America at 250: What's Next for Economic and Political Mobility?* a panel focused on persisting systemic racial inequities and the future of Black Americans. The discussion, featuring National Partnership President Jocelyn Frye and moderated by radio host Jen White, highlighted the strength of Black political power despite recent retrenchment and focused on future progress towards a true racially equitable democracy. The organization also supported the inaugural *Martha's Vineyard Pink Pump*, organized by the Special Needs Network. The brunch brought together forty leaders across the advocacy, business, and caregiving space to discuss the intersection of gender equity, policy, and disability advocacy. The National Partnership capped off the week with an intimate reception and conversation with Jocelyn, facilitated by Areva Martin. Attendees included Congresswoman Terri Sewell of Alabama. The week on the Vineyard was a powerful opportunity to bring people together to discuss and address the challenges women and families are facing. •



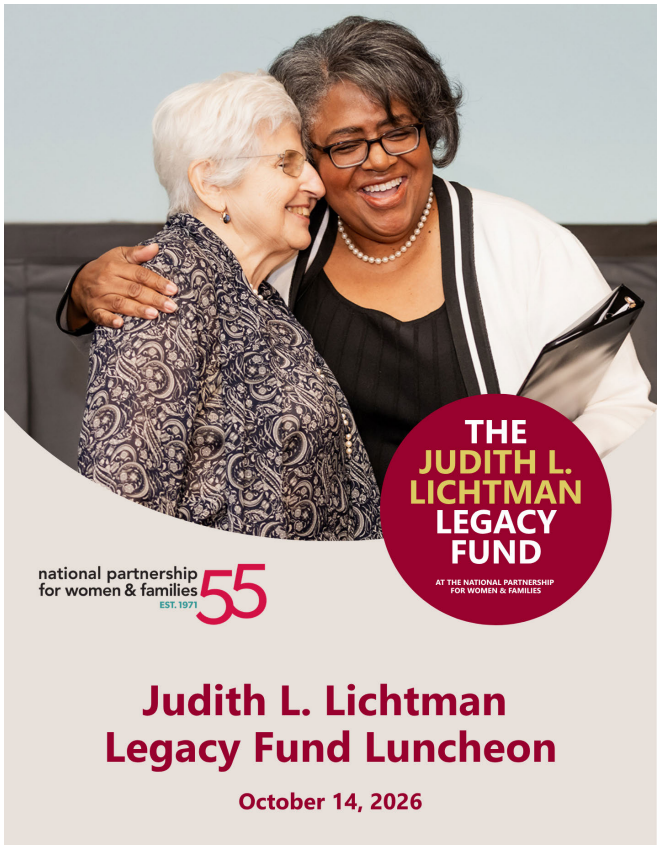
Left to right: Author, attorney, advocate, and media commentator Areva Martin, NPWF President Jocelyn Frye, and Virginia Delegate Briana Sewell at an event hosted by the National Partnership on Martha's Vineyard, August 26, 2026

JLLF Event Recap

On October 14, the National Partnership hosted a luncheon supporting the Judith L. Lichtman Legacy Fund. The event took place at The Conrad in D.C., and featured remarks from former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and a fireside chat with National Partnership President Jocelyn Frye and the first President of the National Partnership Judy Lichtman, moderated by advocate and attorney Maya Harris.

Established in 2024 as a permanent fund, the Judith L. Lichtman Legacy Fund honors Judy's service by supporting transformative initiatives at the National Partnership that reflect her legacy and vision for the future. The fund has already supported two Lichtman Fellows, each a recent law graduate completing a 12-month legal policy fellowship at the National Partnership, and welcomed a third Lichtman Fellow in September.

Thank you to all who joined us to celebrate this transformative work! •



Listening to Black Mothers Event

Following the National Partnership's summer release of the fourth national Listening to Mothers survey findings, we are sharing a new report, *Listening to Black Mothers*, that centers the experiences of 1,300 Black women and birthing families. On Tuesday, November 17 maternal health leaders and changemakers will meet at The Gathering Spot in Atlanta to discuss the experiences of Black childbearing families and hear what they value most. The National Partnership is teaming up with Black Mamas Matter Alliance and MomsRising to discuss these key findings and what they mean for reshaping maternity care policy and practices. The event will be a chance for perinatal professionals, maternal health advocates, community leaders and policymakers alike to learn from one another and strengthen the relationships needed to put frontline voices at the heart of this work. •



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