

[Thesis: Informed Consent Laws for Abortion: What Do Women Have a "Right to Know?"](#) ^[1]

By: Venkatraman, Richa Keywords: [Women's Right to Know Act](#)^[2] [Informed Consent Laws](#)^[3]

Editor's note:

Richa Venkatraman defended her thesis titled "Informed Consent Laws for Abortion: What Do Women Have a "Right to Know?,"" in May 2020 in front of committee members Jane Maienschein, Jennifer Brian, and Carolina Abboud, earning her a Bachelor's degree from Barrett, the Honors College. <https://repository.asu.edu/items/56488>^[4]

Abstract:

As of 2019, 30 US states have adopted [abortion](#)^[5]-specific [informed consent](#)^[6] laws that require state health departments to develop and disseminate written informational materials to patients seeking an [abortion](#)^[5]. Abortion is the only medical procedure for which states dictate the content of [informed consent](#)^[6] counseling. State [abortion](#)^[5] counseling materials have been criticized for containing inaccurate and misleading information, but overall, [informed consent](#)^[6] laws for [abortion](#)^[5] do not often receive national attention.

The objective of this project was to determine the importance of [informed consent](#)^[6] laws to achieving the larger goal of dismantling the right to [abortion](#)^[5]. I found that [informed consent](#)^[6] counseling materials in most states contain a full timeline of fetal development, along with information about the risks of [abortion](#)^[5], the risks of childbirth, and alternatives to [abortion](#)^[5]. In addition, [informed consent](#)^[6] laws for [abortion](#)^[5] are based on model legislation called the "Women's Right to Know Act" developed by Americans United for Life (AUL). AUL calls itself the legal architect of the [pro-life movement](#)^[7] and works to pass laws at the state level that incrementally restrict [abortion](#)^[5] access so that it gradually becomes more difficult to exercise the right to [abortion](#)^[5] established by [Roe v. Wade](#)^[8].

The "Women's Right to Know Act" is part of a larger package of model legislation called the "Women's Protection Project," a cluster of laws that place restrictions on [abortion](#)^[5] providers, purportedly to protect women, but actually to decrease [abortion](#)^[5] access. "Women's Right to Know" counseling laws do not directly deny access to [abortion](#)^[5], but they do reinforce key ideas important to the anti-[abortion](#)^[5] movement, like the concept of fetal [personhood](#)^[9], distrust in medical professionals, the belief that pregnant people cannot be fully autonomous individuals, and the belief that [abortion](#)^[5] is not an ordinary medical procedure and requires special government oversight. "Women's Right to Know" laws use the language of [informed consent](#)^[6] and the purported goal of protecting women to legitimize those ideas, and in doing so, they significantly undermine the right to [abortion](#)^[5]. The threat to [abortion](#)^[5] rights posed by laws like the "Women's Right to Know" laws indicates the need to reevaluate and strengthen our ethical defense of the right to [abortion](#)^[5].

The objective of this project was to determine the importance of informed consent laws to achieving the larger goal of dismantling the right to abortion. I found that informed consent counseling materials in most states contain a full timeline of fetal development, along with information about the risks of abortion, the risks of childbirth, and alternatives to abortion. In addition, informed consent laws for abortion are based on model legislation called the "Women's Right to Know Act" developed by Americans United for Life (AUL). AUL calls itself the legal architect of the pro-life movement and works to pass laws at the state level that incrementally restrict abortion access so that it gradually becomes more difficult to exercise the right to abortion established by *Roe v. Wade*.

Subject

[Abortion--Law and legislation](#)^[10] [Informed consent \(Medical law\)](#)^[11] [Consent, Informed](#)^[12] [Patient Rights](#)^[13] [Patients' Rights](#)^[14]

Topic

[Legal](#)^[15] [Ethics](#)^[16]

Publisher

Arizona State University. School of Life Sciences. Center for Biology and Society. Embryo Project Encyclopedia.

Rights

Copyright Arizona Board of Regents Licensed as Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Format

[Essays and Theses](#) ^[17]

Last Modified

Thursday, March 11, 2021 - 16:11

DC Date Accessioned

Thursday, March 11, 2021 - 16:05

DC Date Available

Thursday, March 11, 2021 - 16:05

DC Date Created

2021-03-11

- [Contact Us](#)

© 2019 Arizona Board of Regents

- The Embryo Project at Arizona State University, 1711 South Rural Road, Tempe Arizona 85287, United States

Source URL: <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/thesis-informed-consent-laws-abortion-what-do-women-have-right-know>

Links

[1] <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/thesis-informed-consent-laws-abortion-what-do-women-have-right-know>

[2] <https://embryo.asu.edu/keywords/womens-right-know-act>

[3] <https://embryo.asu.edu/keywords/informed-consent-laws>

[4] <https://repository.asu.edu/items/56488>

[5] <https://embryo.asu.edu/search?text=abortion>

[6] <https://embryo.asu.edu/search?text=informed%20consent>

[7] <https://embryo.asu.edu/search?text=pro-life%20movement>

[8] <https://embryo.asu.edu/search?text=Roe%20v.%20Wade>

[9] <https://embryo.asu.edu/search?text=personhood>

[10] <https://embryo.asu.edu/library-congress-subject-headings/abortion-law-and-legislation>

[11] <https://embryo.asu.edu/library-congress-subject-headings/informed-consent-medical-law>

[12] <https://embryo.asu.edu/library-congress-subject-headings/consent-informed>

[13] <https://embryo.asu.edu/medical-subject-headings/patient-rights>

[14] <https://embryo.asu.edu/medical-subject-headings/patients-rights>

[15] <https://embryo.asu.edu/topics/legal>

[16] <https://embryo.asu.edu/topics/ethics>

[17] <https://embryo.asu.edu/formats/essays-and-theses>