



State-Mandated Parental Notification for Abortion Puts Minors at Risk

Background: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among those aged 19 years or younger, more than 4 out of 5 pregnancies are unintended; this number increases to 98% among teens aged 15 years or younger.ⁱ In Connecticut, minors under the age of 16 must receive specific pregnancy information and counseling before terminating a pregnancy. Included in this counseling is a discussion about the possibility of consulting with their parents (CGS 19a-601).

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors encourages the Legislature to consider the following information when drafting legislation about state-mandated parental consent for abortion for minors.

- Not every minor is able to talk to their parents. Some minors live in dangerous homes and face abuse, neglect, or incest. There are also minors who have strained family relationships and fear being forced out of the home.ⁱⁱ In situations such as these, parental consent laws make it more difficult, or even dangerous, for minors to safely access abortion services.
- The clearest documented impact of parental involvement laws is an increase in the number of minors traveling outside their home states to obtain abortion services in states that do not mandate parental involvement or that have less restrictive laws.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Some minors postpone abortion until the second or even third trimester of pregnancy to circumvent parental notification requirements.^{iv} There are greater costs and greater medical risks for late-term abortions.
- Including a judicial bypass carve-out for a minor who cannot go to a parent only adds unnecessary additional barriers to timely medical care.
- The majority of minors already involve one or both of their parents in their decision to terminate a pregnancy. Those parents are often supportive of their child's decision.^v

Parental consent laws put minors in vulnerable situations at risk. Connecticut's state law already addresses minors' access to abortion and works well. Any additional barriers to reproductive health care services are not in the best interest of minors in the state.

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ⁱ <<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/>>

ⁱⁱ *ibid*

ⁱⁱⁱ The Impact of Laws Requiring Parental Involvement for Abortion: A Literature Review, Guttmacher Institute, 2009 <<https://www.guttmacher.org/report/impact-laws-requiring-parental-involvement-abortion-literature-review>>

^{iv} Minors' Behavioral Responses to Parental Involvement Laws: Delaying Abortion Until Age 18, Guttmacher Institute, 2009 <

<https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2009/06/minors-behavioral-responses-parental-involvement-laws-delaying-abortion-until>>

^v Henshaw SK, "The impact of requirements for parental consent on minors' abortions in Mississippi," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1995 <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7672103>>