

NC Council for Women

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Sent on behalf of the [NC Council for Women](#) whose mission is to advocate for and empower women, to amplify the voices of women, and to drive policies that promote education, safety, health, and social and economic justice for the women of North Carolina.

NC Council for Women Statement on SB20

Yesterday afternoon, not even 48 hours after announcing their intent to pass an extreme abortion ban, legislative Republicans approved sweeping legislation that bypassed the standard committee process and any meaningful input from medical experts or the public. The legislation was presented as a “conference committee report,” a procedural move to circumvent the typical democratic process and that offers no opportunity for amendments.

Republicans rammed this legislation through at the midnight hour because they know where North Carolinians stand on access to safe and legal abortion. According to a 2023 Meredith College [poll](#), 57% of North Carolinians want to keep or expand the state’s current laws on abortion.

NC Council for Women Chair Annette Taylor issued the following statement:

“SB 20 is not only a dangerous, 12 week abortion ban – it will ban reproductive freedom for North Carolina women earlier and, in some cases, indefinitely. Women deserve the freedom to decide when, and if, to start a family in our state. No one should be forced to give birth, but this bill aims to do exactly that. We support Governor Cooper’s promise to veto this extreme bill and urge legislators to hold the line.”

Yesterday, Governor Cooper had strong words about the harmful proposal. “Don’t let this so-called 12 week abortion ban fool you. It will effectively ban access to reproductive freedom earlier and sometimes altogether for many women because of new restrictions and requirements. This is why Republicans are ramming it through with no chance to amend. I will veto this extreme ban and need everyone’s help to hold it.”

The legislation was presented as a ban on abortions after 12 weeks, but it does not stop there. Some of the long list of disastrous provisions in what Planned Parenthood South Atlantic has called a “[monster ban](#)” include:

1. Banning medication abortion after 10 weeks

Medication abortion, which accounts for 60% of abortions in North Carolina, could only be provided up to 70 days (10 weeks) of pregnancy. This reduces access to medication abortion in NC by a full week from current medical practice.

2. Mandating three in-person appointments for medication abortions

Right now, women can do their initial consultation appointment over the phone. This bill would require the first appointment to be in-person for the woman to receive a state-mandated script, followed by a medically unnecessary 72-hour waiting period, followed by another in-person appointment to dispense the medication, and then still another in-person appointment for follow-up. This legislation comes as we are seeing dramatic increases in maternal mortality in states restricting abortion access—increases of 62%

according to a recent report. North Carolina women cannot afford to face mandatory delays, multiple medically unnecessary trips to the clinic and, for many people, long days of travel and missed wages just to obtain basic reproductive health care.

3. Arbitrary rules and burdensome regulations on clinics designed purely to restrict access

The bill includes restrictions that could shut down clinics, potentially forcing them to acquire an additional “ambulatory surgical center” license despite the fact that abortion is an incredibly safe and common procedure. Health care providers have warned against the dangers of the bill. The North Carolina Medical Society [issued a statement](#) calling these clinic regulations “administratively burdensome” and “not evidence-based.”

For a state that, according to the Council’s own research, is already suffering tremendous maternal and infant health consequences from restricted healthcare access, this bill stands to take a devastating toll on the lives and livelihoods of North Carolinians.