

FACT SHEET: WHY WE OPPOSE SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTION BANS



What are so-called “sex-selective abortion bans”?

Sex-selective abortion bans are an anti-abortion ruse that presents a false choice between gender equity and abortion rights. They make it illegal for a doctor to perform an abortion when she knows or suspects her patient is seeking an abortion due to a preference for the sex of her child. They also require nurses or doctors to report a patient to law enforcement, even in cases where they are only suspicious about her motives. If a doctor or nurse violates the law, they can face jail time, fines, and even lawsuits from a patient’s family.

Why are they bad?

This is a slippery slope. These bans open the door for politicians to further intrude into the personal health decisions of patients. They set a dangerous precedent for allowing politicians to begin defining what are good and bad reasons for seeking an abortion, and are a slippery slope to even more restrictions on access to safe, legal reproductive health care.

They undermine the doctor-patient relationship. Patients must be able to trust their doctors. By forcing doctors to scrutinize and report a patient's motivations for seeking care to authorities, sex-selective abortion bans would interfere with open, honest communication between doctors and patients.

They jeopardize the health of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) to push a political agenda. Supporters of these bans claim they are necessary because of Asians who migrate to the U.S. and bring “backward” values with them. This stereotype about the values of the AAPI community is not only ugly—it’s dangerous. These bans could lead to AAPI patients being singled out for special questioning or even being denied care.

Why is this important for New York City?

NYC’s AAPI community is the largest in the country, with a population of over 1.3 million. Approximately 78% of NYC’s AAPI community are foreign-born, over 49% have limited English proficiency, and 20% are uninsured. NYC’s AAPI community already struggles with substantial barriers to seeking and accessing health care services. Sex-selective abortion bans not only further undermine the ability of AAPI women to have open and honest conversations with their health care provider, but also increase the likelihood that providers will deny them the care and information they need.

TRUE OR FALSE?

This is a widespread problem in the United States.

FALSE. In fact, according to census data, AAPIs are actually having *more* girl babies on average than White Americans.

Supporters of these bans are concerned about women’s rights and gender equity.

FALSE. Supporters of sex-selective abortion bans have horrible voting records not just on abortion and family planning but also on policies like pay equity, health care access, safety net benefits for children and families, and greater protection for survivors of domestic violence. In other words, they don’t care about policies that would actually give women more agency and power in their lives.

These bans are effective at preventing sex selection.

FALSE AGAIN! An analysis of states where these laws have been passed shows that they make no difference whatsoever in the gender ratio of girl versus boy babies born.