



Washington, D.C.

# **Press Release: Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Addressing Disparities to Reproductive Health Advisory Committee Releases Statement on the Criminalization of Abortion**

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For Immediate Release

The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA), through its Addressing Disparities to Reproductive Health Advisory Committee, hereby releases this Statement of Prosecutors on the criminalization of abortion.

“As prosecutors, our clients are the people, and our principal duty is to seek justice within the bounds of the law. Our duty is to serve the public interest, respect the rights of all people, and to exercise discretion to pursue criminal charges only in appropriate circumstances. We refrain from doing so when it negatively impacts public welfare, undermines safety, or furthers inequities.”

“Healthcare, including abortion, and its attendant decision-making processes are private medical matters. Law enforcement, including prosecutors, should not be thrust into this realm. Laws that criminalize healthcare do not protect the public, but instead cost lives. Such laws impede safe medical care and prevent individuals from seeking healthcare services for fear of prosecution, alienating communities, thereby causing dangerous outcomes.”

“Forcing prosecutors into the public health space erodes the institutional integrity of the profession and destroys the trust of communities we took oaths to protect. This compromises public safety. Our responsibilities to our communities, both to safeguard and to inform, are paramount. Threatening our communities with criminal sanctions for reproductive healthcare is an injustice.”

“Prosecutorial discretion for criminal charging decisions is fundamental to our sworn duty to the pursuit of justice. We will exercise that discretion to limit the erosion of reproductive rights. We oppose the criminalization of abortion.”

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The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) is a national non-profit whose mission is to support and enhance the effectiveness of prosecutors in their efforts to create safer communities. APA is made up of elected and appointed prosecuting attorneys from throughout the nation and provides valuable resources such as training and technical assistance to prosecutors to develop proactive and innovative prosecutorial practices that prevent crime, ensure equal justice, and help make our communities safer. APA is committed to the pursuit of justice in whatever form best serves the community. This may include legal proceedings against those who would hurt a child or helping an individual complete a diversion program. APA's focus is on preventing recidivism and providing rehabilitation and successful re-entry. Through multi-disciplinary forums APA creates an optimal environment to foster justice and affect change in the community.

APA's advisory committee is composed of prosecutors from across the country to provide leadership and guidance for its critical project, Addressing Disparities to Reproductive Health. Funded by the Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity (CGRE), the goal of the project is to decriminalize abortion, particularly for those individuals impacted by restrictive laws and policies that prevent them from accessing essential reproductive healthcare. The advisory committee develops equitable and medically informed national policies for prosecutors to address the disparities resulting from unjust and harmful restrictive abortion laws. Future goals for the committee include providing direction for training and other relevant resources that will assist prosecutors. These resources will focus on decriminalizing abortion and strengthens prosecutors' knowledge of science-based reproductive healthcare methods and outcomes.