



University of Pittsburgh Staff Council Statement in Support of Reproductive Rights

We, the University of Pittsburgh Staff Council, with members holding intersecting identities and lived experiences are committed to advocacy and advancement of all staff members, as stated in our mission. As such, we acknowledge and support those staff who are or may be affected by the Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.”

Our membership represents the 61 percent of staff identifying as women at the University of Pittsburgh and includes birthing people more broadly, for which we do not collect a data point ([Pitt OEDI Diversity Dashboards](#)). These members are no longer federally protected nor supported should access to abortion be necessary. We stand with these members.

While Pennsylvania has current state laws that protect legal access to abortion, state governance has the potential to shift. As our Staff Council continues to grow, current and future members may also reside in or have familial relationships with those living in states that have already banned or critically restricted abortion, namely Ohio and West Virginia. We stand with these members.

We recognize that members of Staff Council will be called upon to support students from states that have “trigger” laws in effect due to the overturn of *Roe v Wade* that restrict access to reproductive health services. We stand with those members and those students.

We encourage members of our University of Pittsburgh community to utilize [Resources and Support Services](#) available to our community through the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Civil Rights and Title IX groups, such as the [Pitt Survivor Support Network](#) and campus and community counseling and support resources.

In particular, we stand with and uphold all those who have been historically and systemically oppressed and who are therefore at greater risk of health inequities and mortality. We acknowledge the disproportionate suffering that will be experienced by those in lower socio-economic and/or racially minoritized communities.

[An open letter to UPMC](#) was delivered to its leadership on July 14th, signed by 1800 clinicians, scientists, professors, staff, trainees, and students across UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh. The letter provided examples of the myriad ways the recent decision and resulting bans in states broaden an existing public health crisis:

“Robust data from the Turnaway Study have shown that the inability to obtain a desired abortion leads to significant adverse physical, psychological, and economic consequences (4-13). The U.S. has the highest pregnancy-related mortality rates among high-resource nations, with Black pregnant people dying at 3-4 times the rate of white pregnant people (14-15). A new study by researchers at the University of Colorado predicts that abortion bans will not only worsen the maternal mortality crisis but will further widen the already unconscionable racial disparity (16).”

Staff Council

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We recognize this as a healthcare issue - the rights of individuals to make informed and difficult decisions about their bodies. To have dominion over one's body should be a basic human prerogative.

We commit to continuing to leverage our vast, intersectional, cross-experience and multi-cultural identities to address challenges and make relevant and sustaining change. According to the City of Pittsburgh's Report on Inequality Across Gender and Race, "Pittsburgh's Black women have less favorable outcomes than Black women in the vast majority of US cities" ([Gender Equity Report, 2019](#)). Any loss in ability to make decisions about reproductive and physical health will certainly impact an already grim outlook for Black women in Pittsburgh.

Leaning on the Plan for Pitt principle reinforcing its mission to be a "powerful force for good, and [in an] effort to improve lives" we ask that the University commit to serving as an active participant in reciprocal, explicit and intentional engagement, including partnerships with community experts and stakeholders, related to reproductive justice and health equity.

We also implore our campus community to vote, as well as empower others to vote. The November 2022 primary election will present opportunities to influence the direction of governance in Pennsylvania.

The University of Pittsburgh Staff Council "addresses philosophical and operational issues affecting the welfare of the staff and the University at all University of Pittsburgh campuses," as noted in the current bylaws. We recommit to this creed and encourage our campus staff to stand together to advocate for the protection of staff healthcare benefits and for reproductive justice.

Passed by vote of general Membership on September 28, 2022.

Signature of Staff Council President: *Lindsay Rodgwick*

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