

Opposition to HB 453: Abortion Reason Ban

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HB 453 would prevent someone from obtaining an abortion based on the supposed reason behind their decision, if that reason is based on the presumed race of the fetus or a fetal diagnosis of Down syndrome. It would also compromise the doctor-patient relationship by making the doctor question their patient regarding the reasons behind their decision and deny care depending on their answers.

This bill has nothing to do with promoting equality or preventing discrimination, as the bill sponsors claim. Racism, sexism, and discrimination against people with disabilities are urgent and significant issues we all must address. Instead of doing that, this bill further stigmatizes and isolates people who access abortion and chips away at abortion access.

Decisions about whether and when to continue a pregnancy or raise a child are best made by a woman and her family, in consultation with a healthcare provider. Politicians should never force anyone to make a particular decision about reproduction, including forcing them to become a parent against their will, depriving them of the ability to become a parent, or interrogating their private decisions about pregnancy.

Talking points:

- HB 453 is not about promoting equality. It is part of a larger campaign to stigmatize abortion and pass laws that restrict access to abortion.
- HB 453 sends the message that women, and predominantly women of color, cannot be trusted to make their own healthcare decisions.
- By forcing doctors to scrutinize and second-guess people's reasons for seeking abortion, these bans discourage honest, confidential conversations and interfere in the provider-patient relationship.
- This country and state have long and ugly histories of practicing eugenics. Labeling a patient's personal choice to have an abortion as "eugenics" is inflammatory and manipulative, particularly as we hear stories of immigrant communities, people who are incarcerated, and people with disabilities still being targeted for involuntary sterilization around the country.
- If the legislature were genuinely concerned about race equity in regard to pregnancy and childbirth, they would direct their efforts to pass the North Carolina Momnibus Act (HB 507/SB 632) to address the disparate birth outcomes for Black and brown people in North Carolina.
- If they were authentic in their concern for people with disabilities, they would not co-opt the mantle of disability rights but would instead focus on the true priorities of people with disabilities and their families, including ensuring adequate funding for Medicaid Innovations Waiver slots, a program designed to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities that currently has a more than 15,000 person waiting list in North Carolina.

Bottom line: HB 453 does not address discrimination or the needs of people with Down syndrome. Nor does it intend to end racial discrimination in North Carolina. This bill a part of a larger campaign to pass as many laws as possible to gut the constitutional right to abortion care and to create stigma.