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Key Messages Assignment

**Elevator Pitch**

The federal government should legalize access to abortions nationwide. Reproductive justice and bodily autonomy are rights that every individual needs in order to make personal medical decisions. Banning abortions will not fully end these medical procedures; they will only be carried out in an unsafe manner, leading to more health complications and death. Maternal mortality rates continue to increase across the country, particularly in states with more abortion restrictions. Marginalized and vulnerable minority communities are disproportionately and more significantly affected by abortion bans. Restriction of abortion access can negatively impact women’s mental health.

**Reproductive justice and bodily autonomy are rights that every individual needs to make decisions regarding their own health.**

* Abortion bans restrict health care services, primarily used by women, and reinforce gender stereotypes undermining women’s ability to control their own lives.
* Criminalizing abortion leads to violations of fundamental rights and threatens people’s lives by deterring them from seeking care in obstetrical emergencies.
* International human rights law recognizes that access to abortion is linked to rights of life, health, equality, nondiscrimination, privacy, and freedom from ill treatment.
* Passing legislation would prohibit gestational bans and restrictions on certain abortion procedures.

**Banning abortions will not fully end these procedures; they will be carried out in an unsafe manner.**

* In 2022, nine million women faced complications as a result of unsafe abortion including life-long injuries, severe disability, heavy bleeding, damage to internal organs, or losing the ability to become pregnant in the future.
* 8-11 percent of global maternal deaths are due to unsafe abortions.
* Physical health risks associated with unsafe abortion also include incomplete abortion, hemorrhage, infection, uterine perforation, and damage to the genital tract and internal organs.

**Maternal mortality rates continue to increase across the country, particularly in states with more abortion restrictions.**

* Of the ten states with the highest maternal mortality rates, six of them have total abortion bans.
* According to the National Vital Statistics System, a recent study found that the enactment of gestational age limits for abortion was associated with a 38 percent increase in maternal mortality.
* A 20 percent reduction in Planned Parenthood clinics was associated with an 8 percent increase in maternal mortality.
* A nationwide ban would increase the United States maternal mortality rate by an additional 24 percent.
* Maternal deaths resulting from health-related complications developed or continued in pregnancy, and therefore, women with chronic conditions are not able to access abortion care and have to carry an unwanted pregnancy, putting their lives in danger.

**Barriers to safe abortion are emphasized in marginalized and vulnerable communities.**

* Black women are three times as likely to die in childbirth as their white counterparts.
* Women living in majority Hispanic communities also face severe complications 32 percent more often that those living in majority White communities.
* Women of color are more likely to need lifesaving abortions, in cases like an ectopic pregnancy.
* Abortion bans will harm people’s health by reducing access to other necessary health care services offered by the restricted providers, such as contraceptive services, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, LGBTQ+ health services, referrals for primary care, intimate partner violence prevention, prenatal care, and adoption services.
* Abortion restrictions especially affect people with low incomes, people of color, immigrants, young people, people with disabilities, and medically underserved areas because these populations already experience health disparities due to social, political, and environmental inequities.

**Restriction of abortion access can negatively impact women’s mental health.**

* Challenges in accessing abortion, such as additional costs for out-of-state travel, lodging, childcare, and lost wages can all lead to more psychological stress.
* People who are denied abortions are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, lower life satisfaction and lower self-esteem compared to those who are able to have access to abortions.
* People who were denied abortion care were more likely to live in poverty, experience debt, and have lower credit scores for several years after denial.
* Women who were turned away are also more likely to be tethered to a violent and abusive partner.