

# PLAYING THE LONG GAME

## HOW THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT BUILT CAPACITY TO UNDO *ROE* STATE BY STATE

Political Research Associates  
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Political Research Associates is a social justice think tank devoted to supporting movements that are building a more just and inclusive democratic society. We expose movements, institutions, and ideologies that undermine human rights.

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*Political Research Associates*



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT** and advocates for reproductive rights, health, and justice have been caught off guard by a movement that has adapted to a changing political, social, and cultural landscape. The Christian Right has remained focused on the movement's long-term strategic goals after emerging from its nadir moment in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Progressive activists and reproductive justice advocates who seek to defend human rights and secure personal bodily autonomy in reproductive decision making and self-determination must understand the strategies and tactics the Christian Right has used both to build a movement and achieve policy goals.



Young pro-life activists holding “Pro-Life Generation” signs at the 2016 March for Life rally in DC. SOURCE: ROBIN MARTY/CREATIVE COMMONS

*How do we make the case that the goals of racial, economic, and environmental justice are interconnected with the goals of reproductive justice, and engage with communities to build coalitions?*

Through a critical analysis of the Christian Right’s strategies and tactics, progressive activists and reproductive justice advocates must employ strategies that counter the influence of the Christian Right, envision innovative ways of movement building, and empower a new generation of activists and advocates who have built progressive coalitions that center marginalized communities and seek to further the intersecting goals of racial, economic, gender, immigrant, environmental, and reproductive justice.

# *In Plain Sight*

The common vision of the Christian Right is the belief that the United States was once a Christian nation, and God requires that they restore it. They believe this is not only necessary but also possible.

From the 1980s onward, theology emphasized the necessity of evangelicals to engage in politics, and the anti-abortion movement was one of the most critical components in motivating activism and political engagement. The Christian Right steadily built political and electoral power by using the mechanics of electoral democracy, and it connected the values and identities of evangelical Christians with a particular idea of American citizenship.

The Christian Right's goal was not simply a set of policy priorities, but rather pursuing policy goals that furthered the cause transforming the U.S. and achieving a transcendent vision of the Kingdom of God on Earth. While the movement used the mechanics of democratic governance, the movement's aim is essentially undemocratic with its vision of government enforcing its moral values. This is why it is a political movement, not just a religious one. It has a deep social base capable of regenerating.

While this effort has gone on, largely in plain sight, many Americans continue to resist the idea that a theocratic movement could take hold in the U.S., let alone succeed. This denial, combined with the simultaneous atrophy of organizations dedicated to progressive movement building, provided the opportunity for the Christian Right to build unchecked political power and influence.

## **HOW THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT BUILT POWER**

The contemporary Christian Right provides a voting base for the Republican Party, and the corporate interests that provide the economic power of the conservative movement have embraced or at least accommodated the Christian Right's socially conservative positions. This alliance is made even more potent by the Christian Right's support for regressive economic policies, and the influence of the Christian Right on the policy agenda of the conservative movement has been enhanced by the declining power of both political parties. The Christian Right has gained considerable influence at the state and federal levels by becoming arguably the most powerful player in the Republican Party's coalition.

Evangelical voters were instrumental in the successful presidential campaign of Donald Trump, who openly supported the anti-abortion



movement and repeatedly made overtures to the Christian Right. During the 2016 presidential campaign, prominent voices within the Christian Right urged social conservatives to support Trump as a means to an end of achieving a conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court. The Christian Right was well positioned to call in favors after the 2016 elections when Republicans won control of both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, as well as majorities in 68 out of 99 state legislative chambers, control of 33 state governorships, and full control of the government in 24 states.

Despite some electoral setbacks during the 2018 midterm elections, the Christian Right continues to maintain extensive power at the federal level. A prominent Christian Right leader inhabits the vice president's office, and various Christian Right activists have been installed in key positions throughout federal agencies. Perhaps the most significant success of the Christian Right's alignment with President Trump has been the appointment of dozens of conservative judges to the federal judiciary and the appointment of two justices to the Supreme Court. The Christian Right has succeeded in reshaping the ideological balance of the Supreme Court for a generation.

## ***THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IS AN ADAPTABLE AND DYNAMIC MOVEMENT***

The Christian Right is a social movement seeking profound social transformation and is often misperceived as merely "anti-abortion" or "anti-LGBTQI," but its roots in institutions such as churches give it profound influence in the lives of the rank and file and provides a social legitimacy that is hard to match by advocacy groups. It has managed to build its power within a U.S. political system that itself is changing. Their opponents frequently paint Christian Right activists as unchanging traditionalists operating out of church pews. Far from unchanging, the movement responds to shifting political winds.

The Christian Right has evolved organizationally and ideologically. It has changed tactics. It has built unity across real divides among the right-wing evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Mormons who make up most of its numbers. A key aspect of the Christian Right is that the movement operates less in silos than the progressive movement, and it is often the case that the same Christian Right organizations are opposed to reproductive rights, immigrant rights, LGBTQI rights, and other civil rights.

The consolidation of right-wing power at the federal and state levels was built not only on GOP tactics but also on the Christian Right's dynamism:

its decades-long development of its political institutions, alliances, and theology.

The Christian Right's ascendance in political and cultural power has been made possible by the deep pockets of wealthy individuals and from aligned corporate interests. Several of the most prominent organizations of the Christian Right were founded in the 1980s, and within a generation they have come to provide a foundation for the movement's financial stability. The funders of the Christian Right include companies, foundations such as the Maclellan family foundations, the DeVos family foundations, and the Wilks brothers' foundations.

These wealthy families have not only bankrolled prominent Christian Right organizations such as the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family, but they also fill the coffers of the Republican politicians who seek to implement the policy agenda of the Christian Right.

Donor-advised funds are also a key funder of the Christian Right and operate in a way similar to dark money political action committees in funneling millions of dollars to organizations at the direction of anonymous donors. These types of nonprofit charitable foundations have become the largest source of funding for anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQI organizations, and they provide revenue that often dwarfs that of progressive organizations.

## **HOW THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN RIGHT EVOLVED TO ADVANCE ITS ANTI-ABORTION AGENDA**

In the 1990s, the Christian Right made one of its most important strategic decisions: the anti-abortion movement would set aside the goal of outlawing abortion at the federal level and focus primarily on passing laws that would result in making abortion increasingly difficult to access. The movement's leaders came to realize that overturning *Roe v. Wade* was a monumental task. Additionally, high-profile anti-abortion violence during the 1990s had damaged the public image of the anti-abortion movement and led to internal movement turmoil. National anti-abortion movement leaders sought instead to seek incremental restrictions on abortion through the passage of laws by state legislatures and through litigation.

This earlier strategic shift to incremental policy change set the stage for the anti-abortion movement to achieve unprecedented policy victories when the Republican Party made historic legislative gains during the 2010

midterm elections, which is often credited to the rise of the “Tea Party” amid the backlash to the election of America’s first Black president.

The types of restrictions on abortion that Republican-dominated state legislatures proposed included requiring or increasing mandatory waiting periods prior to obtaining an abortion to requiring pregnant people to complete so-called informed consent forms that included medically inaccurate information about the procedure. The implementation of policies that sought to restrict access to abortion occurred in the context of an ongoing culture of harassment of and violence against abortion providers.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS**

The main feature of scaling up for the Christian Right has been building a mass base operating within the context of a growing network of organizations and institutions—media, education, policy shops, political units, and most importantly, dynamic parachurch organizations operating outside of traditional denominations. Their foundational think tanks and policy shops in Washington and in state capitals have created career paths in both directions, from national to state government and back. They also provided places for politicians to land after being in office and places from which others can launch political careers.

This includes a mature network of state-based think tanks affiliated with Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council, and these organizations in turn draw on strategic resources at the national level, including the so-called bill mills of Americans United for Life and the National Right to Life Committee. This symbiotic relationship has created a talent pipeline for staff members; provided litigation support from allied law firms and legal organizations; and provided a powerful platform to engage and mobilize socially conservative voters.

## **IMPACT OF STATE TAKEOVER ON ABORTION ACCESS**

The Republican domination of state legislatures and governorships has significantly affected access to abortion. There were more abortion restrictions enacted between 2011 and 2013 than were enacted in the entire previous decade, and the abortion restrictions enacted from 2011 to

2018 represented more than a third of all restrictions on abortion enacted since *Roe v. Wade*.

While eliminating the legal right to access to abortion has remained the primary policy objective of the anti-abortion movement, the movement has made calculated shifts in strategy to achieve that goal. In the late 1990s, the Christian Right shifted tactics to advocating for laws that would increasingly restrict access to abortion in an effort to create a de facto ban on abortion. During the mid-2010s, the Christian Right shifted tactics again to increasingly advocate for laws that prohibited physicians from using specific abortion procedures and laws that tested the constitutional limits of abortion bans based on the gestation of the pregnancy.

In 2019, with the newly installed conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court, the Christian Right shifted tactics and took direct aim at *Roe v. Wade*. Republican lawmakers introduced dozens of anti-abortion bills in state legislatures during the first three months of 2019, and there has been an unprecedented number of so-called fetal heartbeat bans.

In addition to abortion policy restrictions, there is an ongoing culture of harassment and violence targeted at abortion providers, staff, and patients. Churches around the country have organized protests outside of clinics, and so-called crisis pregnancy centers are often strategically located near abortion providers to intentionally confuse patients, provide misinformation, and often serve as a base of operation of anti-abortion movement organizing.

## ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POWERFUL INTERESTS

Religious social conservatives and libertarians that represented significant constituencies of the conservative movement have long sought to find sufficient common ground to transcend their respective protest movements and become a governing coalition. While the Trump era may represent a disruption in the ideological underpinnings of the conservative movement, it remains to be seen if conservatism will be completely consumed by so-called Trumpism.

The Christian Right and anti-abortion activists and leaders use similar anti-government ideology and revolutionary rhetoric of the Christian Patriot and militia movements and their libertarian counterparts, who see abortion not only as murder but also as an expression of an increasingly secular, tyrannical, and explicitly anti-Christian government. Fortified

evangelical-Catholic Right coalitions amplify anti-abortion efforts to control the public policy debate in most of the country and to advance a remarkable amount of legislation.

## **QUESTIONS FACING THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, HEALTH, AND JUSTICE MOVEMENT**

How the Christian Right manages these disagreements could shape its future prospects. Without any suggestion that reproductive health, rights, and justice forces should emulate the strategy of their organized opposition, our analysis of how the Christian Right has built power raises a range of strategic questions outlined in this report that the reproductive rights, health, and justice movement, now facing its own nadir point, would do well to consider.

If we acknowledge the valid critiques of the progressive movement that we too often operate in silos in a way in which opposition does not, then how do we build a movement that seeks to operate in solidarity across the movement?

As reproductive health, rights, and justice advocates respond to the current threats to bodily autonomy, how do we counter an opposition that successfully employs fundamentally undemocratic strategies and tactics to achieve public policy objectives and goals?

How do we make the case that the goals of racial, gender, immigrant, economic, and environmental justice are interconnected with the goals of reproductive justice, and how do we engage with the communities that are most impacted by systems of oppression to build coalitions?

How do we forge an intersectional movement that centers marginalized communities, and focus strategic goals and tactical objectives “to build streams of organizational development that come together in a single river of change?” ■



# INTRODUCTION

**THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT** is one of the most successful social and political movements of modern times, yet its persistence and effectiveness have repeatedly caught those defending reproductive rights, health, and justice off guard. The Christian Right has made enormous political inroads, including into the vice president's office and other prominent roles in the Trump administration. Understanding the scope and resilience of this dynamic movement is essential for those defending reproductive health, rights, and justice in the United States.

The contemporary Christian Right has continually adapted to changing political, social, and cultural conditions since its own nadir moment following desegregation of schools and the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* to become the powerhouse it is today. The

2016 March for Life, January 22, 2016,  
Washington, D.C. SOURCE: ROBIN  
MARTY/CREATIVE COMMONS



*Strong movements need a clear vision or frame, a solid membership base, and the commitment to be in it for the long haul.*

Christian Right's power and influence within the GOP has turned the Republican Party solidly anti-abortion. To defeat the Christian Right and secure bodily autonomy for all, we must understand how the Christian Right has been so successful in achieving its goals. We must be willing to rethink the infrastructure, strategies, and tactics that the reproductive health, rights, and justice movement needs now.

This report focuses on the threats to abortion access, as one of the many targets of the Christian Right, which is actively seeking to undermine and restrict comprehensive sex education, access to birth control, availability of infertility treatment, access to health care, LGBTQI rights, civil rights, and human rights more broadly. This report makes no attempt

to keep pace with fast-breaking events and instead invites reflection on the longer game by assessing how the Christian Right built power sufficient to produce some of these outcomes and invite reproductive justice advocates to consider the infrastructure they will need to rebuild a movement capable of overcoming our organized opposition.

To understand its victories, we need a dispassionate assessment of the Christian Right as a movement that goes beyond issue-driven partisanship, messaging, and the temptation to punditry. This is not in order to copy the religious and political Right in its successes. As the late Jean Hardisty and Deepak Bhargava warned in 2005, the Right's success arguably came from "a top-down, hierarchical movement structure and relentless message discipline"; however, this "dominant narrative about the Right's rise to power" provides an incomplete analysis of the movement. These tactics are antithetical to the progressive movement.<sup>1</sup>

Like any other religious, political, or social movement, the anti-abortion movement and the wider Christian Right make regular course corrections, seeking opportunities for political expansion and renewal. And as in any other struggle, success is substantially determined by the side that best understands and adapts to the strategy of its opponents. So, keeping up to date with changes in their ideology, leadership, shifting alliances and resources, strengths and weaknesses, strategy, and tactics is vital.

In *Making Change: How Social Movements Work—and How to Support Them* social movement researchers Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz argue that "strong movements need a clear vision or frame, a solid membership base, and the commitment to be in it for the long-haul."<sup>2</sup> Movements also need what is "necessary to implement and make the movement real: a viable economic model, a clear understanding of governance and what it should look like, research and communication to change the story, and a clear policy package to push the desired change." Finally, the authors ask whether the movement is able to get to scale, "to go from a single problem to a movement on a broader scale." They ask, is there a "program for networking amongst various movements to build streams of organizational development that come together into a single river of change"? Drawing on this framework, we can see how the Christian Right became one of the country's most influential political movements.

Without any suggestion that reproductive health, rights, and justice forces should emulate the strategy of their organized opposition, our analysis of how the Christian Right has built power raises a range of strategic questions for the reproductive justice movement to consider. ■







Norma McCorvey (Jane Roe) and her lawyer Gloria Allred on the steps of the Supreme Court, 1989. SOURCE: ROBIN MARTY/CREATIVE COMMONS



# HOW THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT BUILT POWER

**THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN RIGHT** consists of politically active conservative evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Mormons. It is challenging to pinpoint exactly what portion of the electorate the Christian Right represents. In the United States in 2016, 26 percent of the public self-identified as evangelical Protestants, 20 percent as Catholics, and 2 percent as Mormons. But not all evangelical Protestants, Catholics, or Mormons identify with the Christian Right. White Christians are heavily represented in the Republican Party. Approximately three in four (73%) Republicans identify as White and Christian, and over one in three



Donald Trump prays with pastors during a campaign visit in Las Vegas, N.V., October 5, 2016. SOURCE: REUTERS/MIKE SEGAR.

*Though the Christian Coalition itself decreased in visibility, its successes at political mobilization are woven into the culture of conservative Christian life, and more broadly into the Republican Party.*

(35%) Republicans identify as White evangelical Protestant.<sup>3</sup> In the 2016 election, more than eight out of ten (81%) White born-again/evangelical Christians voted for Trump,<sup>4</sup> and in the 2018 midterm elections, 75 percent of White born-again/evangelical Christians voted for Republican candidates for Congress.<sup>5</sup>

Anti-abortion politics play a key role in the Christian Right, helping to unite Catholics, evangelical Christians, and Mormons around a common policy agenda. Among the general American public, the majority believe

abortion should be legal in all or most cases.<sup>6</sup> However, among members of the evangelical and Mormon faith, the majority feel it should be illegal in all or most cases. According to Pew Research Center's 2014 *Religious Landscape Study*, 63 percent of evangelical Protestants and 70 percent of Mormons say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases.<sup>7</sup> Catholics are divided on the matter, with 47 percent saying abortion should be illegal in all or most cases and 48 percent saying it should be legal in all or most cases.<sup>8</sup> However, official Catholic doctrine states unequivocally "the moral evil of every procured abortion,"<sup>9</sup> according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church approved by Pope John Paul II in 1992.<sup>10</sup>

## *History of Christian Right Institutions*

*It is a political  
movement, not just  
a religious one.*

The "New" Christian Right that first emerged in the late 1970s featured a surge of institution building that targeted multiple realms of American society, especially education, broadcasting, and politics. James Dobson, for example, founded Focus on the Family in 1977 to promote conservative ideologies and public policies they deemed consistent with their narrow definition of "traditional family." The same year, Pat Robertson, a Southern Baptist minister, founded Christian Broadcasting Network University (now Regent University), which was named after his religious television network and production company. Two years later, in 1979, Jerry Falwell, a Southern Baptist pastor, cofounded the Moral Majority with the goal of mobilizing conservative Christians into a voting bloc that could drive a rightward shift in U.S. politics, most immediately by supporting Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign. Falwell went on to turn his attention to developing his small Liberty Baptist College into Liberty University, now one of the largest Christian universities in the world and led by his son Jerry Falwell Jr.

That same year, in 1979, Beverly LaHaye founded Concerned Women for America as a conservative counterpoint to the feminist movement.<sup>11</sup> Later, in 1983, Family Research Council was founded, with strong ties to Focus on the Family.<sup>12</sup> In 1989, Pat Robertson founded the Christian Coalition, which later had 50 state chapters.

From the 1980s onward, the Christian Right changed their theology to emphasize the necessity of evangelicals to come off the political sidelines while waiting for the biblical end times, and instead engage and change the world via "biblical principles." This generated new enthusiasm for the anti-abortion cause. To gradually build political power using the mechanics of electoral democracy, they found ways to connect their values and identities as Christians with a particular idea of U.S. citizenship and the skill set and political vision that goes with becoming effective activists, candidates, and elected officials. Their goal was not only

achieving concrete policies, such as banning abortion and teaching creationism, but through those policies the enactment of a transcendent vision of the Kingdom of God on Earth. So, while using the machinery of democratic governance, the movement's aim is essentially undemocratic with its vision of government enforcing its moral values through laws even as it becomes more and more of a minority. This is why it is a political movement, not just a religious one.

Though the Christian Coalition itself decreased in visibility, its successes at political mobilization—teaching and training apolitical religious conservatives to become voters, voters to become activists, and activists to become candidates—are woven into the culture of conservative Christian life, and more broadly into the Republican Party.<sup>13</sup>

The issue of abortion helped galvanize the Christian Right community and brought together Catholics and evangelical Christians. From prominent national organizations to a vast array of state and local organizations, the Christian Right plays a key role in opposition to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice within the United States and increasingly globally.

There is extensive overlap between Christian Right and anti-abortion organizations. The Christian Right champions efforts in state legislatures to pass laws restricting access to abortion, is an organizing force behind protests outside of abortion clinics, lobbies for public school boards to adopt abstinence-only sex education curricula,<sup>14</sup> and leads other oppositional efforts that often targeted or exploited marginalized communities.

## *Overview of Political Impact of the Christian Right*

To understand the success of the Christian Right as a movement, we need to appreciate how it shifts strategy within a U.S. political system that is itself changing. An essential aspect of a successful social movement is to shift power to change policy. The Christian Right is both religiously committed and also a hard-nosed political actor. It has achieved a considerable amount of influence in state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress as well as state and federal agencies due to its essential role as part of the Republican Party coalition.

The contemporary Christian Right – made up of politically active conservative evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Mormons – provides a voting base for the corporate wing of the conservative movement who

# DETAILS ON GOP REDISTRICTING EFFORTS

## THE HIGHLY DEVELOPED INFRASTRUCTURE

of the Christian Right increased the movement's power and influence within its deepening alliance with the Republican Party. The GOP also developed sophisticated political strategies to take historic numbers of state legislative seats and whole legislative chambers that benefited its Christian Right partners.

Beginning in the 1960s, Southern states dominated by Democrats for decades gradually became Republican, as conservative Whites in the South were urged by William F. Buckley at *The National Review* and, later, other GOP leaders to reject the Civil Rights Movement and shift their partisan affiliation. This "Southern Strategy" explicitly made racist anti-Black rhetoric part of the right-wing platform. This trend was enhanced in part by conservative political development in the states outside the South, but more dramatically by Republican-led congressional redistricting efforts.

A Republican effort called the Redistricting Majority Project, or REDMAP, sought to increase conservative control of state legislatures. There was nothing secretive about this project or its goals. In 2010, Karl Rove himself announced it in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, under the title, "The GOP Targets State Legislatures: He who controls redistricting can control Congress."<sup>142</sup> While REDMAP's stated goal was to control Congress, Republicans first had to control the state legislatures charged with redrawing the boundaries of congressional districts following each decade's national census.

Republicans built on their dramatic success in 2010, and Democrats lost more than 900 state legislative seats during the Obama era. The 2010 election brought hundreds of conservative Republicans into state legislatures and swung a number of legislative

chambers from Democratic to Republican Party control. The GOP captured more than 680 seats in state legislatures across the country, gaining control of 20 additional legislative bodies, including both chambers in Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as the House in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.<sup>143</sup> "On the state level," wrote journalist David Daley, "this was the biggest rout in modern history."<sup>144</sup> The election enabled widespread gerrymandering of congressional and legislative districts, as Republican lawmakers used voter data and advanced analytics to ensure the maximum amount of safe Republican districts.

The impact on abortion laws was almost immediate. By May 2011, 15 anti-abortion bills had already been introduced and enacted into law, while more than 120 others had been approved by at least one legislative chamber. Both sides said that these were largely due to the prominence of abortion in the national health-care debate and Republican electoral gains in 2010.<sup>145</sup> This has remained the trend. The historic gains in the number of one-party state governments set the stage for large numbers of anti-abortion bills and regulations, and an escalation in the restrictive nature of these policies.

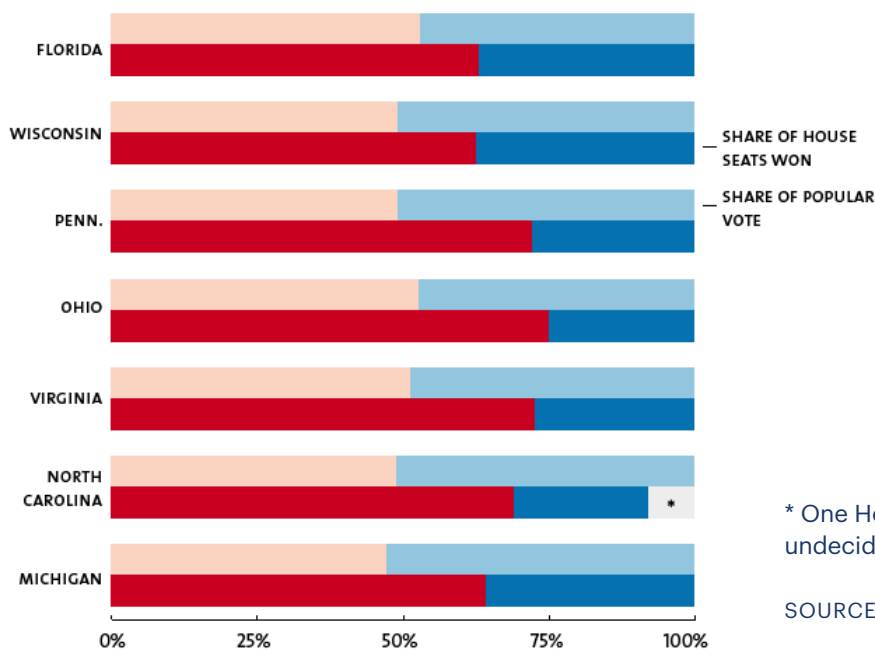
## Another Dimension of Gerrymandering

A less discussed aspect of REDMAP's path to success since 2012 is its efforts to recast the Republican Party's White, male image. The Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC) credits its work recruiting, training, and financing female and minority candidates as a key part of its success in picking off state legislative seats

# GOP Gerrymandering at its Best

Republicans led redistricting in these key states in 2010.

Compare the share of House seats won by each party in 2010 to the popular vote.



\* One House race in North Carolina remains undecided. Third-party votes were not included.

SOURCE: POLITICO

Mother Jones

and flipping more chambers in 2014.<sup>146</sup> This continued to be a feature of the RSLC's efforts in 2016.<sup>147</sup>

While Republican conservatives sought to diversify their slate of candidates across the country, part of the dirty, not-so-secret efforts of the redistricting and reapportionment schemes were what politicians call "racial gerrymandering." Historically, the courts have required that redistricting of state and federal legislative districts be carried out in ways that allowed for fair representation of minorities, especially African Americans. However, the Republicans have taken partisan redistricting to such an extreme since the 2010 census that crafting districts in the name of fair representation has sometimes become a cover for partisan racial gerrymandering, isolating as many African American (and typically Democratic) voters as possible into selected districts.<sup>148</sup> This practice

has been the subject of much litigation, notably in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Extreme gerrymandering has created unrepresentative, highly partisan Republican legislative majorities, which are then able to impose a variety of voter suppression tactics aimed at Democratic constituencies, especially racial minorities.<sup>149</sup>

In response to the GOP's REDMAP strategy, former president Barack Obama partnered with former attorney general Eric Holder in 2017 to launch the National Democratic Redistricting Committee<sup>150</sup> to advocate for a comprehensive redistricting strategy.<sup>151</sup> The GOP has continued to focus on redistricting, as the RSLC partnered with the State Government Leadership Foundation (SGLF) and launched REDMAP 2020.<sup>152</sup>



Lou Engle onstage at The Call Nashville, 2007. SOURCE: EDEN FRANGIPANE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

in turn embrace or at least accommodate the Christian Right's socially conservative positions. For instance, the Center to Protect Patient Rights, linked to the Koch brothers, funded Americans United for Life, Concerned Women for America, and Susan B. Anthony List.<sup>15</sup> This alliance is even more potent considering the Christian Right's support for regressive economic policies and the declining power of both political parties. The Christian Right remains driven and at the voting booth regularly pulls levers for Republicans.

The Christian Right won its considerable reach at the state and federal levels by becoming a power player in the Republican Party coalition. Christian conservatives dominated the Republican National Convention in 1996. The GOP's sweep in the 2010 midterm elections enabled further consolidation of the right-wing coalition's power at the state level as legislatures took charge of the electoral redistricting that follows every national Census. Governing parties redrew the electoral maps to make it harder for their opponents to win, thereby controlling more state governments, enabling greater influence on public policy at the state and municipal levels. GOP-dominated states wielded their new power to implement policies such as onerous restrictions on reproductive health care, discrimination against transgender people, criminalization of the



undocumented immigrant community, and draconian budget cuts that undermine public education.

Abortion is one of the top policy priorities and one of the most animating organizing issues of the Christian Right. The Republican dominance of so many state governments in the aftermath of the 2010 midterm elections set the stage for an unprecedented number of anti-abortion laws and regulations on the state-level. The Christian Right's anti-abortion "bill mills" generate an assortment of model legislation, which are disseminated to allied lawmakers in state legislatures to carry over the finish line and create new, burdensome regulations restricting access to abortion care.

The Christian Right's goal to gain sufficient power to effect significant change reached a new height in the U.S. presidential election of 2016. The Christian Right emerged as a leading faction in the Republican Party and gained control of all three branches of the federal government as well as the majority of state legislatures and governorships. It has, by any measure, come a long way toward realizing its vision of the theocratic Christian nation with laws inspired by, if not directed by, biblical principles.

The Christian Right was well positioned to call in favors after the 2016 elections when Republicans won majorities in 68 out of 99 state legislative chambers, control of 33 state governorships, and full control of the government in 24 states, compared to the Democrats' six.

However, Republican control of all three branches of the federal government was short-lived, as the 2018 midterm elections resulted in Democrats taking control of the U.S. House and making significant gains in state legislatures and governorships.<sup>16</sup> After the midterm elections, Republicans held majorities in 61 state legislative chambers and control of 27 state governorships. Republicans currently have complete control of 22 states, while Democrats have complete control of 14 states, and there is divided partisan control of 13 states.<sup>17</sup>

The Christian Right now has extensive power on the federal level. In the wake of the alliance between the Christian Right and the Trump presidential campaign, leaders in the movement have been bestowed with political patronage in victory beyond their wildest dreams. The Christian Right's most prominent political allies appointed to key administration positions have included Mike Pence as vice president, Mike Pompeo as secretary of state, Betsy DeVos as secretary of education, Ben Carson as secretary of housing and urban development, and Rick Perry as secretary of energy. Former attorney general Jeff Sessions was also among the Christian Right's allies elevated to cabinet-level positions. Subcabinet posts were also filled by such figures as Charmaine Yoest,

the former president and CEO of Americans United for Life (AUL) who was appointed as Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and later moved to the Office of National Drug Control Policy.<sup>18</sup> Yoest departed the Trump administration in 2019 and joined the Heritage Foundation as the vice president for the Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity.<sup>19</sup>

Other appointees with links to the Christian Right include Shannon Royce, former chief of staff and COO at Family Research Council;<sup>20</sup> Roger Severino, formerly at The Heritage Foundation and The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty;<sup>21</sup> Valerie Huber, former executive director of Ascend (formerly the National Abstinence Education Association);<sup>22</sup> and Steven Valentine, a former staffer at Susan B Anthony List.<sup>23</sup> Scott Lloyd, senior advisor at the Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives, has a background in the anti-abortion movement and served as director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) from 2017 to 2018. During that brief time, he denied seven abortion requests coming from ORR facilities, including one from a 17-year-old girl leading to HHS being sued by the ACLU.<sup>24</sup> Lloyd also reportedly directed his staff to update a spreadsheet that tracked the menstrual cycles of undocumented minors, and he inquired about “reversing” medication abortion.<sup>25</sup> Other Christian Right leaders were appointed to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, including Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, and Gary Bauer, president of American Values.<sup>26</sup>

President Trump openly supports the anti-abortion movement and during the president campaign repeatedly made overtures to the Christian Right. During the Republican presidential primary campaign, Trump released a list of names of individuals that he would consider nominating for the Supreme Court, which included several conservative jurists currently serving in the federal and state courts.<sup>27</sup> During the final presidential debate with Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, Trump stated that he would appoint judges to the Supreme Court who would vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and he repeated often used anti-abortion movement talking points that grossly mischaracterized second- and third-trimester abortion procedures.<sup>28</sup>

He continues to meet with Christian evangelical leaders who serve as informal advisors, such as Paula White, an evangelical pastor of a Florida megachurch and chair of Trump’s Evangelical Advisory Council.<sup>29</sup><sup>30</sup> In January 2018 he became the first sitting president to address the annual anti-abortion national event, March for Life, on live television.<sup>31</sup> That same week, Vice President Pence hosted a private reception at the White House for anti-abortion leaders.<sup>32</sup>

One of the priorities of the Christian Right and now the Trump administration is redefining and deploying “religious liberty,” which links with their efforts to restrict abortion and reproductive health care.<sup>33</sup> In May 2017, President Trump signed an executive order on religious liberty, and in October 2017, former attorney general Jeff Sessions published guidelines on federal law protections for religious liberty.<sup>34</sup> In July 2018, Sessions launched a Religious Liberty Task Force, which continues to build on these efforts.<sup>35</sup> At the launch event, members of the Christian Right and anti-abortion organizations were present.<sup>36</sup> Sessions remarked that the “Task Force will help the Department [of Justice] fully implement our religious liberty guidance by ensuring that all Justice Department components are upholding that guidance in the cases they bring and defend, the arguments they make in court, the policies and regulations they adopt, and how we conduct our operations.”<sup>37</sup>

The Christian Right has also developed a playbook for promoting “religious liberty” in state capitols. The 2018–2019 *Report and Analysis on Religious Freedom Measures Impacting Prayer and Faith in America* provides state lawmakers with a readymade package of model legislation from the Christian Right’s policy agenda.<sup>38</sup> The 148-page report,<sup>39</sup> which drives a campaign called Project Blitz,<sup>40</sup> was published by the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation with contributions from the National Legal Foundation, Wallbuilders ProFamily Legislative Network, and Claybrook, LLC, and it employs a similar strategy utilized by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to promote right-wing corporate friendly legislation and by Americans United for Life (AUL) to promote anti-abortion legislation.

With President Trump, the Christian Right is now in the position to shape the federal judiciary for a generation. Neil M. Gorsuch was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2017. Gorsuch replaced the late Justice Antonin Scalia, after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell successfully blocked former president Obama’s nominee to the Court, Merrick Garland.

In the summer of 2018, Justice Anthony Kennedy announced his retirement, and the Christian Right had an opportunity to dramatically shift the ideological balance of the Supreme Court. President Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh and, despite multiple allegations of sexual assault and misconduct, the Senate voted mostly along party lines to confirm Kavanaugh.

In addition to the Supreme Court, President Trump has filled the appellate courts with conservative judges and the Republican-controlled Senate has confirmed more judges to the federal courts in the first two years of Trump’s presidency than during Obama’s first term.<sup>41</sup>

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# *The Christian Right is an Adaptable and Dynamic Movement*

The Christian Right is a social movement seeking profound societal transformation. It is often misperceived as merely “anti-abortion” or “anti-LGBTQI,” but its roots in institutions such as churches and schools give it profound influence in constituents’ lives with social legitimacy that is difficult for progressive advocacy groups to match. It has managed to build its power within a U.S. political system that itself is changing. The consolidation of right-wing power at the federal and state levels built not only on Republican tactics but also on the Christian Right’s dynamism: its decades-long development of its political institutions, alliances, and theology.

Their opponents frequently paint Christian Right activists as unchanging traditionalists operating out of church pews. But far from unchanging, the movement responds to shifting political winds. It has developed organizationally and ideologically. It has changed tactics. It has built unity across real divides among the right-wing evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Mormons who make up most of its numbers.

One key aspect of the Christian Right movement is that they work less in silos than the progressive movement. Often, it is the same Christian Rights groups opposing abortion rights, LGBTQI rights, civil rights, immigrant rights, and other human rights.

The Christian Right has evolved around a number of key issues, beginning in the 1970s with resistance to the use of the federal tax code to require nonprofit, tax-exempt schools and colleges to abandon racially discriminatory policies in order to retain their federal tax exemptions. This was followed by, among other things, organized opposition to pornography, abortion, LGBTQI rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and government regulation of homeschooling and Christian private schools. These issues had their constituencies, mostly in conservative evangelical and Catholic churches, which continue to change to this day.

## *Unity Among Evangelicals and Catholics*

A major change in the religious-political character and direction of the Christian Right was the culmination of a long-term effort for conservative evangelicals to find ways to broaden and deepen their culture war alliance

with conservative Roman Catholics generally, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in particular. This required overcoming many religious cultural differences, ideological divides, as well as centuries-old distrust and animosity.

These efforts bore fruit with the 2009 publication of the *Manhattan Declaration*, which leaders of this alliance viewed as a common platform from which to wage a culture war. Indeed, the historic convergence of evangelical institutions and activists with the American Roman Catholic Church is underscored by the fact that the more than 150 original signers included sitting bishops, archbishops, and cardinals—not merely a token Catholic prelate or two. What’s more, the historic success of their three-themed platform of “life,” “marriage,” and “religious freedom” is proven by the fact that it now guides the political framing of much of the Christian Right, the Catholic Bishops, and the Republican Party.<sup>42</sup>

However, the Trump era has brought new challenges to the relationship between evangelicals and Catholics. There are growing divides between these two groups. Many in the evangelical Christian leadership are standing firm in their support of President Trump, though some are critical. Catholic leaders, including the USCCB and the Pope, appear to be more open in their criticism.<sup>43</sup>

## ***Tactical Shifts in the Christian Right’s Racial Politics***

There are tactical shifts in the Christian Right’s racial politics, as both the numbers and proportion of its base of White evangelicals and White Roman Catholics shrink. A 2017 report from the Public Religion Research Institute showed that White evangelicals are only 17 percent of the U.S. population, down from 23 percent in 2006. Similarly, White Catholics are 11 percent of the U.S. population, down from 16 percent in 2006. More broadly, the number of Americans who identify as White Christians decreased. In 1976, approximately 81 percent of Americans identified as White Christians. In 2016, only 43 percent of Americans identify as White and Christian. At the same time, membership in Christian churches is becoming more racially diverse. Only 36% of Catholics under the age of 30 are White. Evangelical Protestants are also becoming more diverse.<sup>44</sup>

The demographic changes are significant since the Christian Right famously emerged from racist school desegregation battles, not just backlash to abortion and gender politics. One of the issues that first spurred the Christian Right was their opposition to desegregation and civil rights in the 1960s and 1970s. Across the South from the 1950s

to 1970s, private schools were created in response to desegregation, including a White Christian academy in Lynchburg, Virginia, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1967.<sup>45</sup> A 1971 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Green v. Connally*, ruled that these academies were not eligible for tax-exempt status because they were racially discriminatory.<sup>46</sup> This issue galvanized conservative evangelical Christian leaders like James Dobson and increased their political involvement.

The anti-abortion movement has attempted to respond to the shrinking base of White evangelicals by highlighting the voices of people of color such as Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), who said that “the day of white, angry, pro-life advocates as a collective movement, that day is officially over.”<sup>47</sup> Described as “America’s largest Hispanic Evangelical organization,” NHCLC represents more than 40,000 churches.<sup>48</sup>

The anti-abortion movement has a long history of employing racist rhetoric, even while the movement has simultaneously sought to adopt the rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement or the abolition movement. Anti-abortion activists have attempted to appropriate the language of the Movement for Black Lives<sup>49</sup> and exploit racist stereotypes about Black women.<sup>50</sup> Anti-abortion activists have also targeted Asian American women<sup>51</sup> by promoting so-called sex-selective abortion bans based on racist stereotypes and assumptions about the reproductive health-care decisions of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women.<sup>52</sup>

## *Funding of Christian Right*

Christian Right leaders are committed to playing the long game and working to scale, goals made possible by money from aligned corporate interests and from dedicated wealthy individual donors.<sup>53</sup> The infrastructure of the Christian Right has been largely underwritten by conservative philanthropists, who have not just supported political activism but also made significant investments in major institutions such as universities and law schools, publishing houses, and radio and TV broadcasting outlets.<sup>54</sup> Several of the most prominent organizations and institutions of the Christian Right were founded in the 1980s, and within a generation they came to provide both sustainable sources of revenue and a pipeline for young activists into better-paid professions, as well as a new old-boy network of Christian Right cronyism in all areas of society.

Funders of the Christian Right include foundations such as the Maclellan family foundations, Bolthouse Foundation, Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Gianforte Family Foundation, the DeVos family's foundations, the Wilks brothers Thirteen Foundation and Heavenley Father's Foundation, and Sean Fieler and his Chiaroscuro Foundation.<sup>55</sup>

Sean Fieler is a "leading conservative Catholic philanthropist" and anti-abortion funder, supporting groups such as Americans United for Life, Susan B. Anthony List Education Fund, National Abstinence Education Foundation, Live Action, Human Life International, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Fertility Education and Medical Management, C-FAM, Students for Life, and multiple crisis pregnancy centers.<sup>56</sup>

The Texas billionaire brothers Farris and Dan Wilks have funneled millions of dollars to organizations associated with the Christian Right and anti-abortion groups, through Farris' Thirteen Foundation<sup>57</sup> and Dan's Heavenly Father's Foundation.<sup>58</sup> The Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, Liberty Council, and Human Coalition have each received financial support from the Wilks brothers. During 2017, the brothers' foundations distributed a combined \$15.2 million in grants.

Another key funder is the National Christian Charitable Foundation (NCF).<sup>59</sup> Since NCF's founding in 1982, they have given more than \$10 billion in total grants.<sup>60</sup> NCF's grants support several organizations associated with the Christian Right. During 2016, NCF awarded millions of dollars in grants to organizations including Focus on the Family (\$5 million), Family Research Council (\$2.2 million), and Alliance Defending Freedom (\$15.6 million).<sup>61</sup> According to *Inside Philanthropy*, they are likely the single largest "source of money fueling the pro-life and anti-LGBT movements over the past 15 years."<sup>62</sup>

Conservative think tanks have also received significant funding over the years. In 2016, the Heritage Foundation had more than \$82 million in revenue.<sup>63</sup> According to the *New York Times Magazine*, their "annual budget depends on six-figure donations from rich Republicans like Rebekah Mercer, whose family foundation has reportedly given Heritage \$500,000 a year since 2013. But it also relies on a network of 500,000 small donors."<sup>64</sup> By comparison, Center for American Progress, which is among the most influential progressive think tanks, had a revenue of only \$51.1 million in 2017.<sup>65</sup> ■



# HOW THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT ADVANCED ITS ANTI-ABORTION AGENDA

**THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT HAS UTILIZED** evolving strategies and tactics to systematically undermine the constitutional right to an abortion affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade*. The successes of the anti-abortion movement since 2010 were the culmination of a commitment to investments in movement building and strategic policy goals.

The common vision for the Christian Right in the broadest sense is that the United States was once a Christian Nation and God requires that they





Pro-life protestors kneel and pray at the 2016 March for Life rally in DC.  
SOURCE: ROBIN MARTY/CREATIVE COMMONS

*While this effort has gone on, largely in plain sight, many Americans continue to resist the idea that a theocratic movement could take hold in the United States, let alone succeed.*

restore it. They believe that this is not only necessary but also possible, and that this was the intention of the Founding Fathers and even God himself.

A historic theological shift in evangelical Protestantism began in earnest in the 1980s, transforming the main elements of evangelicalism from relatively apolitical stances to a growing and maturing political orientation.

Before this shift, many evangelicals were disinclined to political action and held that in the end times true Christians will be “raptured” into the clouds, and Jesus will return to defeat the forces of Satan. Many evangelicals thought that the end times were here, with the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 as a sign. These evangelicals are called “premillennialists” and believe Jesus will return before the world had become perfectly Christian.

Their view of the end times was challenged by the “post-millennialist” Christian Reconstructionists, who argue that Jesus could not return until the world had become perfectly Christian and the faithful had ruled for 1,000 years. This had significant implications for evangelicals’ engagement in worldly affairs, actually *requiring it* in order to build nations based on biblical principles or even biblical laws. Authors in this movement outlined what Christian or biblical governance should look like.<sup>66</sup> Their theology influenced the broader evangelical world and made possible the evangelically oriented Christian Right as we have known it since the 1980s.

This shift has happened most dramatically among Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians influenced by a movement called the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR),<sup>67</sup> which is animated by the vision of taking “dominion” over the major institutions of society.<sup>68</sup> The Seven Mountains theology advocates for Christians to conquer the cultural “mountains” of family, religion, education, media, entertainment, business, and government.<sup>69</sup>

While this effort has gone on, largely in plain sight, many Americans continue to resist the idea that a theocratic movement could take hold in the United States, let alone succeed. This denialism is part of a wider denial about the strength and resiliency of the Christian Right itself.<sup>70</sup> This is starting to change, evident in the mass mobilizations against the Trump administration and popular fascination with the television show *The Handmaid’s Tale*, a dystopian story based on Margaret Atwood’s 1985 novel about a theocratic regime taking power in the United States. Activists across the United States and around the world are donning handmaids’ garb at protests to draw comparison to the theocratic regime in the fictional story and our current reality.

## ***Build Enduring Infrastructure at the State and National Levels***

For the Christian Right, scaling up involves building a mass base operating within the context of a growing network of organizations and

institutions—media, education, think tanks, policy shops, political units, and most importantly, dynamic “parachurch” organizations operating outside of traditional denominations. Their think tanks and policy shops in Washington, D.C. and in state capitals have created career paths in both directions, from national to state government and back. They provide places for politicians to land after being in office and places from which others can launch political careers, including a network of Family Policy Councils affiliated with Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council.

The Christian Right and the wider conservative movement have systematically established think tanks, research organizations, and polling operations in support of its campaigns and long-term strategy. For example, in the 1990s, Focus on the Family’s state level political affiliates (in think tanks and policy groups) determined their approach to marriage, in terms of focus and framing, by drawing on polls conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide, a Republican-oriented firm headed by Ronald Reagan’s personal pollster, Richard Wirthlin.<sup>71</sup>

Creating organizational infrastructure around a long-term vision of the future was necessary to launch the kinds of political assaults on government and governmental policies that are currently shocking the system.

The states draw on strategic resources at the national level, including the so-called bill mills of Americans United for Life and the National Right to Life Committee; a two-way state/national talent pipeline; litigation support from Alliance Defending Freedom and others; and voter identification, education, development, and get out the vote efforts led by UiP and other electoral entities.<sup>72</sup>

The Christian Right has come of age during an era when many of the major institutions of society, including churches, have come to be less trusted and membership and participation rates have fallen off steeply. Conservative churches were the last of the Christian churches to be affected by this, but the membership and chapter-based organizations of the Christian Right have also been affected. They are, however, adapting to the age of the internet, and their publishing, communications, and data-mining work continue to grow and exert political influence.

Despite the decrease, millions of Americans continue to attend church regularly, and this provides a large organizing spaces for the Christian Right, and Republicans in Congress continue to work to expand churches’ ability to undertake political campaigns.<sup>73</sup> Some churches also lead local anti-abortion efforts, including protests at local abortion clinics and supporting anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers.



An anti-abortion sign with the image of a hand holding a rosary, captured at a Pro-Life March in McAllen, Texas on 1/21/2017. SOURCE: ROBIN MARTY/ CREATIVE COMMONS

## THE RISE OF STATE-LEVEL POLICY ORGANIZATIONS

If an old way of organizing was building empires, the new way of organizing is building ecosystems of organizations that make change together. While empires still dominate parts of the Christian Right, there is increasing diversification within it. A wide variety of organizations, institutions, authors, publishing houses, and media outlets abound. The Christian Right operates in a wider political ecology of conservatism, libertarianism, corporate capitalism, and, for that matter, religion and Christianity. It is a distinct movement that is shaped and informed by the realities of working within these wider contexts and relationships.

The religious and political Right have pursued longstanding plans to create political and public policy infrastructure in the states. Since the Reagan revolution of the 1980s had sought to devolve as much public policy responsibility as possible from the federal government to the states, it was clear that they needed conservative policy and lobby shops, as well as a talent pool of policy wonks, lobbyists, and activist groups with sufficient expertise to influence state government. They also set about to develop political talent to run for office and to staff the government offices they were able to take.

This worked extremely well and took the form of two related networks that crafted a rough division of labor reflective of the interests of the main factions of the Republican Party. The Family Policy Alliance, formerly known as CitizenLink, is comprised of allied state policy shops affiliated with both Focus on the Family and Family Research Council (FRC) addressed matters of interest to the Christian Right, while State Policy Network (SPN), comprising mostly lobbying and policy shops, focused on more business and libertarian-oriented policy work. (Sometimes the two networks overlap.)

Both networks steadily built political power and influence over the last three decades. As of March 2019, the SPN's more than 60 member organizations span all 50 states and the Christian Right's web of Family Policy Councils are currently functioning in at least 40.<sup>74</sup> The latter are closely affiliated with the Focus on the Family national political hub, Family Policy Alliance (previously known as CitizenLink). Family Policy Alliance in turn closely collaborates with the Alliance Defending Freedom, a national Christian Right legal network.<sup>75</sup> Both networks also closely relate to national, Washington-based conservative movement institutions such as FRC and Heritage Foundation.

These organizations and networks share common purposes, experiences, and intelligence to wield influence greater than the sum of their parts. As such, they have emerged as one of the central features of the Christian as well as the wider political Right. Member organizations in both networks vary in size and significance, but they are deeply embedded in the political culture of the states in which they operate. They help develop a class of public policy professionals, political operatives, and lobbyists who often become legislative staff or legislators themselves. These represent clear career tracks for talented Christian Right policy staffers operating in the small worlds of state politics.<sup>76</sup> And they often prove to be stepping-stones to national advocacy and political positions. Mike Pence was president of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation and served on the board of the Indiana Family Institute.<sup>77</sup> Tony Perkins led the Louisiana Family Forum in Baton Rouge prior to taking the helm of FRC in Washington, D.C. Likewise, Brian Brown was the executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut before joining the National Organization for Marriage.

## **THE RISE OF BILL MILLS**

The Christian Right has made restricting abortion on the state level a primary policy goal. This policy program has had the advantage of being discrete and achievable, as well as a never-ending source of organizing and policy opportunities to build the movement. The creation of these regulations has occurred in the context of the systematic building of

infrastructure in the states to address the full range of opportunities presented by the devolution of federal policy to the states during the Reagan administration.

Americans United for Life (AUL)<sup>78</sup> is among the most prominent anti-abortion organizations in the country, and the organization has focused its efforts on advocating for restrictions on abortion on the state level.<sup>79</sup> Yoest, AUL's former president, compared the organization's strategy to a game of chess, "In terms of social change you have to think about what's the next move. You're not going to capture the queen in one fell swoop."<sup>80</sup> The self-proclaimed "architect of the pro-life movement" has developed and drafted several different types of anti-abortion model legislation, a tactic that is central to the long-term strategic goal of the anti-abortion movement.

Founded in 1971, AUL has curated a catalogue of more than 40 pieces of model legislation, which can be requested via the group's website.<sup>81</sup> AUL publishes *Defending Life*, an annual legislation guide that is used widely across the country and is now in its 13th edition.<sup>82</sup> According to a *Rolling Stone* article from 2014,

Each year, AUL sends state and federal lawmakers across the country a 700-page-plus "pro-life playbook," *Defending Life*, which it describes as "the definitive plan for countering a profit-centered and aggressive abortion industry, while laying the groundwork for the ultimate reversal of *Roe*." Among its annual features is a 50-state "report card" on the state of anti-abortion legislation, as well as a step-by-step guide, [former AUL president] Yoest says, to help lawmakers "understand that *Roe v. Wade* doesn't preclude them from passing common-sense legislation."<sup>83</sup>

State legislators adapt the generic bills to fit with individual state law and political circumstances. AUL claimed that the majority of such bills considered in the 2016 state legislative sessions were based on its inventory as listed in its publication *Defending Life*.<sup>84</sup>

AUL believes in the incremental approach and its "general counsel reportedly once compared his group's approach to ending legal abortion to carving a ham: 'Each slice makes it smaller and smaller until it is no more.'"<sup>85</sup> AUL continues to expand its efforts and also works internationally.<sup>86</sup>

National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), which has affiliates in almost every state, also plays a critical role in state legislative development.<sup>87</sup> Founded by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1968, NRLC states it is "the nation's oldest and largest pro-life organization."<sup>88</sup> According to NRLC's website, "The Department of State Legislation works

with National Right to Life’s state affiliates to draft legislation and pass protective pro-life laws at the state level that protect mothers and their unborn children.”<sup>89</sup>

## LEGAL SYSTEM

*“The place you change America isn’t in Washington. It’s in the states ... A court case can get up to the Supreme Court and Roe v. Wade be overturned. Which will ultimately happen. We have to keep pushing at these state levels.”*

— KANSAS GOVERNOR SAM BROWNBACK  
SPEAKING AT THE NRLC 2012 CONVENTION

The Christian Right now benefits from decades of organizational infrastructure development, and the rise and maturation of this infrastructure has long-term legal as well as legislative and political consequences. The Christian Right has its own public interest law firms and networks of attorneys, such as the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, First Liberty Institute, Liberty Counsel, Thomas More Society, and American Center for Law and Justice. One of the largest is Alliance Defending Freedom, with revenue of \$51.1 million in 2016.<sup>90</sup>

These law firms are fed by graduates of several conservative Christian law schools that did not exist until recent decades, notably Regent University School of Law (founded in 1986) and Liberty University School of Law (2004). While not all of the law firms’ budgets are allocated toward reversing reproductive rights or for that matter on state legislation, these law firms have substantial resources—including a growing legal talent pool—on which the Christian Right can draw.

Since politicians tend to be lawyers, these law schools and law firms have also expanded the number of potential Christian Right candidates for office. Some of these law firms also provide legal support for anti-abortion groups and advocates, such as Center for Medical Progress and 40 Days for Life.

## TRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE

The Christian Right has a deep social base capable of regenerating itself through younger generations and expanding partnerships. The Christian Right and broader conservative movement invests in supporting young people and works to build and nurture their talent pool.<sup>91</sup> Talent scouting and conservative activist training is epitomized by the Arlington,



Young pro-life activists holding “Life Squad” signs at the 2016 March for Life rally in DC. SOURCE: ROBIN MARTY/ CREATIVE COMMONS

Virginia, based Leadership Institute, headed by Morton Blackwell, which since its founding in 1979 has played an outsized role in the recruiting, vetting, and training of young conservative activists and candidates across the spectrum of the conservative movement, including many anti-abortion advocates. The institute claims, for example, that in 2016 alone it has trained more than 10,000 young people in “371 training events representing 44 types of Institute trainings. These ranged from on-camera TV trainings to weeklong Campaign Management Schools to grassroots activist workshops to the Youth Leadership School, the boot-camp of politics.”<sup>92</sup> The Institute also maintains a college campus network, as well as a news and communications hub, Campus Reform.<sup>93</sup> Leading anti-abortion activist Lila Rose attended Leadership Institute trainings, which is where she met James O’Keefe, the conservative activist notable for publishing surreptitiously recorded videos of public figures or government officials that are purported to show alleged corruption or illegal activity.<sup>94</sup> The Leadership Institute also provided her with funding to start an anti-abortion student publication.<sup>95</sup>

At the state level, there are explicitly Christian Right-oriented training academies as well. The Student Statesmanship Institute (SSI) in Lansing, Michigan, for example, has, since the mid-1990s, staged multi-track,



weeklong summer trainings for conservative Christian high school and homeschooled young people in the basics of legislation, the judiciary, business, media, and election campaigns. The institute touts itself as “Michigan’s Premier Biblical Worldview & Leadership Training Program for high school students” and claims to train 300 students during its annual summer programs.<sup>96</sup> The program is substantially underwritten by the philanthropies of the family of U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

## *The Christian Right Seeks Alignment*

The growth of the Christian Right is supported by its alignment with business and libertarian elements of the wider conservative coalition. This alignment was crafted by leaders such as Tony Perkins of Family Research Council and prosperity gospel preachers who embrace a view of free market economics as religiously inspired,<sup>97</sup> vilify secular government, and turn a blind eye to abuses and excesses of corporate capitalism.

Religious conservatives and economic libertarians have for decades worked to build alignment and fashion a governing coalition. The rise of the Tea Party before the pivotal 2010 elections catalyzed elements of the electorate in ways that added edge and dynamism to the right-wing coalition. While the Tea Party had the multifaceted and largely self-sustaining character of a movement, it also involved some well-funded organizational components, underwritten by the Koch brothers and their dark money partners.

Abortion and LGBTQI-related matters were sometimes downplayed in 2010 in favor of small government, anti-tax, and pro-gun populism. However, most if not all of the Tea Party candidates were anti-choice, and polling in 2010 indicated that about half of self-identified Tea Partiers were also part of the Religious Right.<sup>98</sup> The movement’s architects were not political newcomers by any stretch of the imagination. Rather, many of those who helped create the Tea Party had, several decades before, helped birth the Christian Right. Now, with a series of shrewd moves, they had again expanded their coalition and their political gains.<sup>99</sup>

The Christian Right operates nimbly on many issues, not just abortion, to build power and fight its opposition. Religious social conservatives and libertarians for a number of years have sought to find sufficient common ground to transcend their respective protest movements and become a governing coalition. The Trump era may provide a laboratory for the Christian Right to test various strategies for aligning the social conservatives and libertarians in common cause.

Some anti-abortion and Christian Right activists and leaders share the anti-government ideology and revolutionary rhetoric of the Christian Patriot and militia movements and their libertarian counterparts, who see abortion not only as murder, but as an expression of an increasingly secular, tyrannical, and explicitly anti-Christian government, echoing some of the Tea Party and right-wing populist sentiment of Trumpism. How the Christian Right manages these disagreements could shape its future prospects.<sup>100</sup>

Militant groups in the anti-abortion movement, such as Operation Rescue, Operation Save America, Justice For All, and Abolish Human Abortion, have generally operated outside of legislative campaigns, rejecting the strategy devised in the 1990s of incremental change through government processes for direct action.

## ***States of Siege: Impact of State Takeover on Abortion Access***

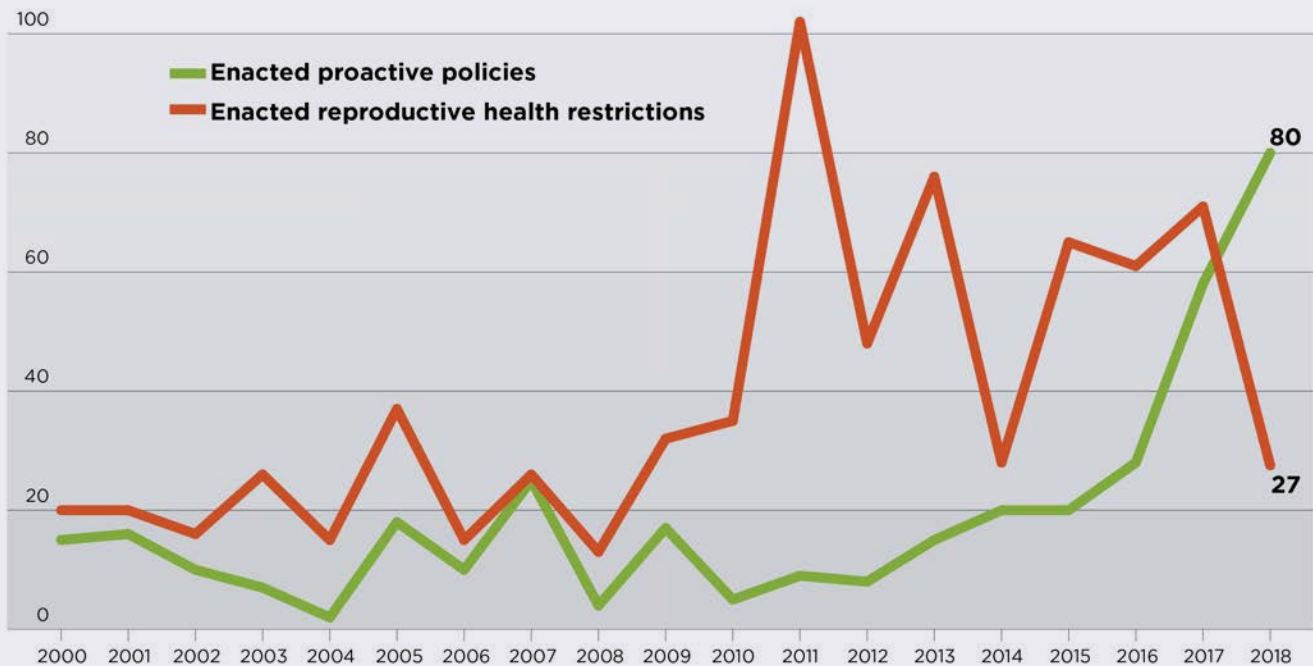
*“Today, we have opportunities before us which, if properly exploited, could result in an America where abortion may indeed be perfectly legal, but no one can get one.”*

— MARK CRUTCHER, LIFE DYNAMICS, 1992

In the 1990s, after decades of pursuing an outright ban on abortion, the Christian Right made one of its most important strategic shifts: attack abortion primarily by trying to make it increasingly difficult to access rather than ban it outright. Many leaders realized that *Roe v. Wade* would not easily be overturned. Plus, high-profile anti-abortion violence during the 1990s had led to internal movement turmoil. National leaders sought instead to win incremental restrictions through new state laws and the courts.

Eliminating access to abortion, in whatever ways possible short of criminalization, has been a main public policy goal of the Christian Right and its anti-abortion-focused elements since the *Casey* decision of the Supreme Court in 1992. *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* allowed legislatures to restrict abortion in ways that do not create an “undue burden.” This case upheld *Roe v. Wade* but also opened the way to legal and regulatory obstacles to access, which the anti-abortion movement was poised to exploit.

# In 2018, state policies enacted to support reproductive health far outweighed the number of restrictions

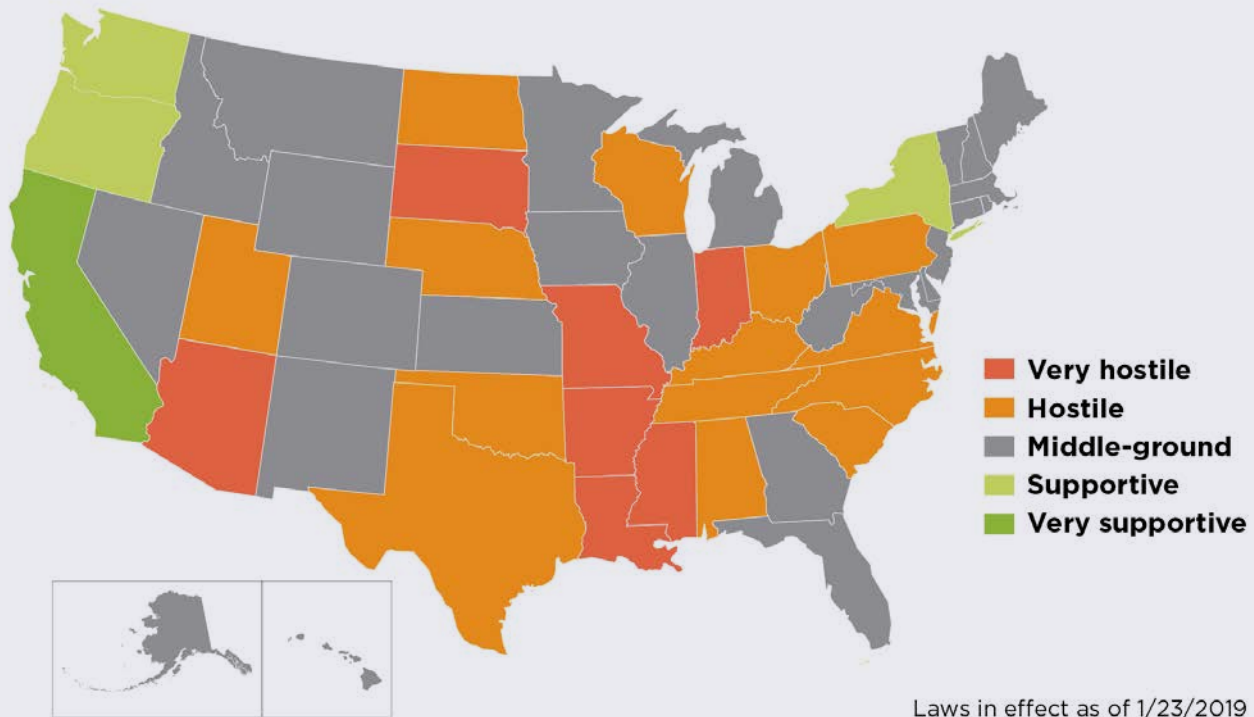


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Midway through the administration of President Bill Clinton, in the wake of high-profile anti-abortion violence and the improbability of overturning *Roe*, movement strategists sought a practical way forward. Their conclusion was announced in a 1996 manifesto, developed by more than 40 anti-abortion and Christian Right leaders, titled “The America We Seek: A Statement of Pro-Life Principle and Concern.”<sup>101</sup> This document, which was widely published in conservative journals and on websites at the time, called for “a broad-based legal and political strategy” not necessarily to overturn *Roe*—although that remained the ultimate aim—but to make abortion as inaccessible as possible using the legal opening provided by the *Casey* decision to pursue partial victories through incremental laws.

SOURCE: GUTTMACHER  
INSTITUTE, 2019<sup>153</sup>

## In 2019, 21 states are hostile or very hostile to abortion rights, while only four states are supportive or very supportive



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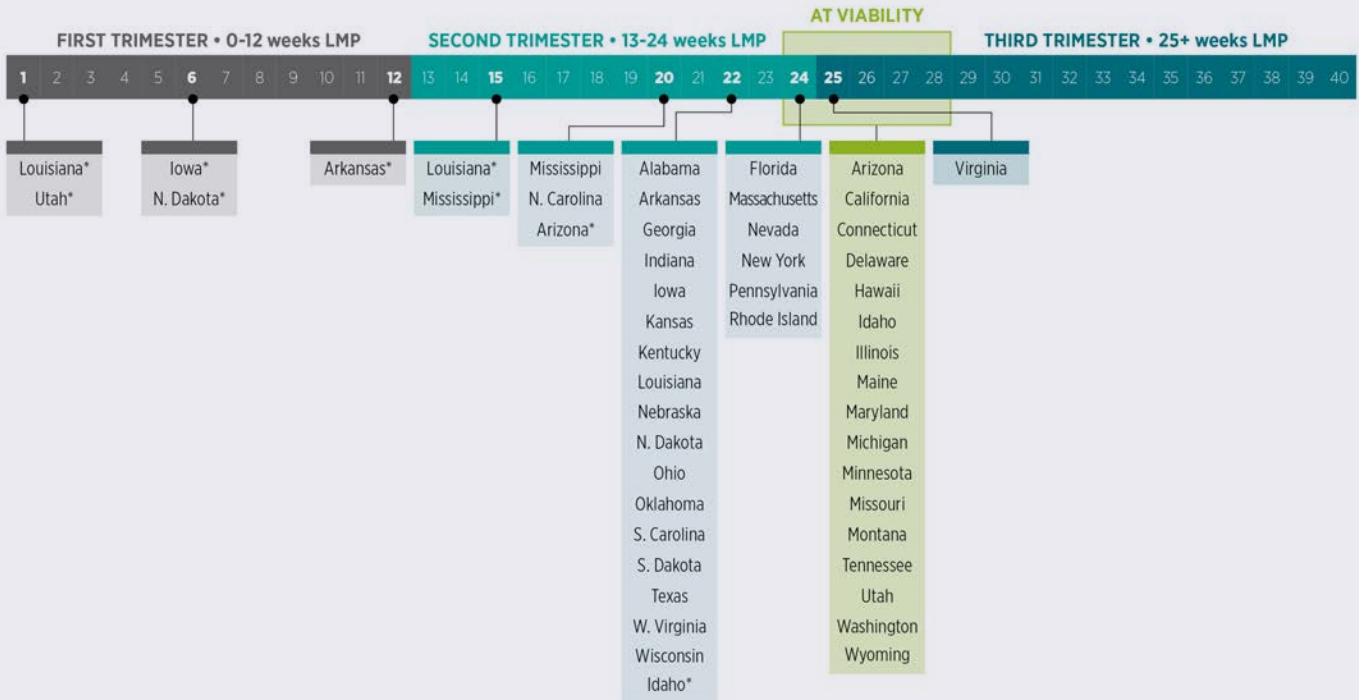
In that process, the document suggested, partial victories would be welcomed:

Legal reforms that fall short of our goal, but which help move us toward it, save lives and aid in the process of moral and cultural renewal...These regulations do not afford any direct legal protection to the unborn child. Yet experience has shown that such regulations “genuine informed consent, waiting periods, parental notification” reduce abortions in a locality, especially when coupled with positive efforts to promote alternatives to abortion and service to women in crisis. [sic] A national effort to enact Pennsylvania-type regulations in all fifty states would be a modest but important step toward the America we seek.

This incremental approach has served ever since as the guiding principle for anti-abortion strategy in the states, sometimes carried out under the rubric of “abortion reduction.” The group that issued the strategy paper included George Weigel of the Ethics and Public Policy Center; Clarke D. Forsythe of Americans United for Life; Wanda Franz of the National Right

SOURCE: GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, 2019<sup>154</sup>

# State abortion bans by gestational age



All gestational ages listed use the medical standard for pregnancy dating, which is based on the patient's last menstrual period (LMP). Some state laws consider "fertilization" the point when pregnancy begins; it is two weeks after LMP. As a result, a ban at 20 weeks postfertilization equates to a ban at 22 weeks LMP. Viability is a medical determination based on whether a fetus can survive outside the womb. This point varies by pregnancy; a fetus generally reaches viability between 24 and 28 weeks. \*Ban not in effect due to ongoing or resolved litigation. Laws in effect as of 12/31/2018.

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to Life Committee; Roman Catholic legal scholars Robert P. George of Princeton and Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard; Fr. Frank Pavone of Priests for Life; James Dobson of Focus on the Family; Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, Beverly LaHaye of Concerned Women for America; and former Gov. Robert P. Casey (D-PA) of Casey decision fame.<sup>102</sup>

This strategic shift to incremental policy change brought investment in a robust state policy infrastructure and meant the anti-abortion movement was ready when in 2010 the Republican Party took over 20 state legislative chambers.

Republican leadership in many state legislatures has significantly affected abortion policies. The Guttmacher Institute reported "more state abortion restrictions were enacted in 2011–2013 than in the entire previous decade."<sup>103</sup>

Overall, the 424 state abortion restrictions enacted from 2011 to 2018 represent more than a third of all the abortion restrictions enacted since

SOURCE: GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, 2019<sup>155</sup>

*“It doesn’t make  
a difference if  
it’s legal if it’s  
inaccessible.  
And it’s definitely  
inaccessible  
to many people.”*

*Roe v. Wade*. While the 23 abortion restrictions enacted during 2018 were the lowest number of abortion restrictions enacted in more than a decade, the 63 abortion restrictions enacted during 2017 was the “largest number of abortion restrictions enacted in a year since 2013.”<sup>104</sup>

Republican lawmakers introduced dozens of anti-abortion bills in state legislatures during the first three months of 2019, and many of these proposals take direct aim at *Roe v. Wade*. So-called fetal heartbeat bans, which prohibit abortion after approximately six weeks of gestation, have been introduced by Republican lawmakers in 14 states.

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, who has previously said that his “goal is to end abortion” in the state,<sup>105</sup> signed a bill into law a bill to ban abortion after a fetal heartbeat has been detected.<sup>106</sup> Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin also signed a bill into law to ban abortion after a fetal heartbeat has been detected;<sup>107</sup> however, the U.S. District Court in Louisville issued a temporary restraining order on the same day that blocks the state from enforcing the law.<sup>108</sup>

State abortion restrictions will likely continue under Republican Party leadership.<sup>109</sup> According to the Guttmacher Institute, “21 states are hostile or very hostile to abortion rights,” and 29 million women of reproductive age (43%) live in states that are either hostile or very hostile toward abortion rights.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time, the reproductive justice movement’s focus on proactive policies is working. In 2017, there was “a dramatic upsurge in proactive efforts to expand access to abortion, contraception, other reproductive health services and comprehensive sex education or to protect reproductive rights.”<sup>111</sup> Twenty-one states adopted 58 new proactive measures, including 12 on abortion.<sup>112</sup> This was a large increase from only 28 proactive measures enacted in 2016.<sup>113</sup> This trend continued in 2018. In the first half of 2018, “twenty-seven states and DC adopted new measures...to enhance reproductive health or protect reproductive rights,” and four new provisions protect access to abortion.<sup>114</sup>

Among the most widespread types of state abortion restrictions are Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) laws, which are restrictions required of abortion providers “that go beyond what is necessary to ensure patient safety.”<sup>115</sup> These include laws that mandate specific dimensions for exam rooms and medically unnecessary requirements for doctors.<sup>116</sup> As explained by *Rewire.News*, TRAP laws “seek to eliminate access to safe abortion care by requiring that clinics meet medically unnecessary and sometimes ridiculous conditions...raising the costs of retrofitting clinics to a degree that makes running a clinic untenable.”<sup>117</sup>

Other types of state abortion restrictions include abortion bans after a specified point in pregnancy, bans on sex or race selection, genetic

anomaly bans, bans on specific abortion methods, insurance prohibitions for abortion, mandatory counseling with an anti-abortion slant, waiting periods, restrictions on telemedicine, mandatory ultrasounds, parental involvement required for minors, and allowing health-care providers such as hospitals to refuse to provide medical services and referrals.<sup>118</sup> There are many other state legislative measures to restrict sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice, such as defunding reproductive health organizations, especially Planned Parenthood, and measures on sexuality education, contraceptives, and other aspects of sexual and reproductive health care. Often, public funds are redirected to anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers, often religiously affiliated organizations that provide limited health-care-related services with the primary mission of dissuading pregnant people from seeking abortion care.

These policies have a negative impact on many people seeking abortions and other forms of reproductive health care. In 2018, the *New York Times* ran an article on what it takes to get an abortion in Mississippi, one of the most difficult places to access abortion services due to multiple restrictions.<sup>119</sup> There is only one abortion provider in the entire state and doctors are only available a few days per week. People seeking an abortion are forced to make two trips to clinics, separated by at least 24 hours. They must plan transportation, child care, potential lodging, and time off work. Due to Hyde Amendment restrictions, Medicaid does not cover abortion in Mississippi and many people are forced to pay out of pocket. All of this can be very cost prohibitive. If you are a minor, you will face additional barriers due to parental consent requirements. If you are over 16 weeks pregnant, you will need to obtain an abortion at a provider out of state. Diane Derzis, owner of the only remaining abortion clinic in Mississippi, explained, "It doesn't make a difference if it's legal if it's inaccessible. And it's definitely inaccessible to many people."<sup>120</sup>

## WAR OF ATTRITION: THE EXAMPLE OF WHOLE WOMAN'S HEALTH

One of the anti-abortion laws has already prompted a U.S. Supreme Court ruling, 2016's *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. *Whole Woman's Health* represented a remarkable victory for reproductive rights advocates, but the Christian Right continued to win the war of attrition, even while losing the case.

In Texas, where the case originated, the state legislature, drawing on model bills crafted by Americans United for Life,<sup>156</sup> passed an omnibus anti-abortion bill that included five types of abortion restrictions. The law included a provision that required abortion clinics meet the same building standards as hospital-like ambulatory surgical centers, which would have required abortion providers to spend millions to renovate their current facilities or purchase new facilities to meet the regulatory requirements. The state also mandated that physicians who provide abortion services must obtain admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the abortion clinic.<sup>157</sup> This was a catch-22, since many hospitals refused admitting privileges to abortion providers, particularly hospitals that are part of Catholic health systems. In other words, the legislation worked just as it was intended—a fact considered by the Court in ruling against the state. But by the time the Court ruled in favor of *Whole Woman's Health*, the law had already reduced the number of clinics offering legal abortion in Texas from more than 40 to just 18.<sup>158</sup>

Indeed, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that in Texas counties where the distance to the nearest abortion clinic had increased by 100 miles or more, abortions had decreased by 50.3 percent.<sup>159</sup> Advocates fear access to abortion services in Texas may never fully recover.

Increasing restrictions on abortion services mean seeking care requires greater distances and time commitments—a difficult and expensive proposition for many patients. In 2017, one in five patients would have to travel at least 43 miles to reach the nearest abortion provider, and this disproportionately impacts pregnant people living in rural and low-income communities.<sup>121</sup> In May 2019, Georgia became the sixth U.S. state to ban abortion after 6 weeks.<sup>122</sup> Megan Donovan, senior policy manager at Guttmacher, said that access to abortion should not be determined by zip code, “Poor and low-income women and those who live in rural areas are often hit hardest by state restrictions that exacerbate long-standing inequalities in abortion access.”<sup>123</sup>

There are significant barriers to accessing reproductive health care for other marginalized communities, particularly LGBTQI people.<sup>124</sup> Lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people are more likely to experience a pregnancy than their heterosexual peers, and Lisa Lindley, the study’s lead author, said that “these populations are often ignored or assumed to not need information or reproductive care or services and they absolutely do.”<sup>125</sup> Transgender men experience pregnancy and seek abortion care, after transitioning either socially and hormonally<sup>126</sup>, however, Transgender and gender nonconforming people, in particular trans people of color, face serious disparities in health-care outcomes.<sup>127</sup> Transgender men have reported facing barriers to accessing breast and cervical cancer screenings,<sup>128</sup> in addition to experiencing verbal harassment, physical assault, and denial of treatment at a doctor’s office or hospital.<sup>129</sup>

## *Impact on Abortion Providers and Patients*

In addition to abortion policy restrictions, there is an ongoing culture of harassment and violence targeted at abortion providers, staff, and patients.<sup>130</sup> Among the National Abortion Federation’s (NAF) abortion provider members in 2017, “trespassing more than tripled, death threats/threats of harm nearly doubled, and incidents of obstruction rose from 580 in 2016 to more than 1,700 in 2017.”<sup>131</sup> They also saw “an increase in targeted hate mail/harassing phone calls, and clinic invasions, and had the first attempted bombing in many years.”<sup>132</sup>

A network of anti-abortion and Christian Right groups target providers and patients, such as Operation Rescue, Operation Save America, Center for Medical Progress, 40 Days for Life, Priests for Life, Abolish Human Abortion, and many others. Operation Rescue also runs AbortionDocs.org, which compiles information about abortion providers across the country.<sup>133</sup>



Churches around the country also organize protests outside of clinics. Crisis pregnancy centers often set up near abortion providers to try to intentionally confuse patients and provide misinformation.<sup>134</sup> The harassment and violence on top of new state regulations and other barriers can be too burdensome and dangerous for providers to continue to practice. Protests and harassment outside of clinics also have a significant negative impact on patients.<sup>135</sup>

The effects of these measures, taken in the wider context of an ongoing culture of harassment, criminal violence, and more, is that they are working as intended—to curtail abortion access. According to the Guttmacher Institute, the number of facilities providing abortions in the United States decreased from 1,720 to 1,671 between 2011 and 2014, and the number of clinics providing abortions decreased from 839 to 788.<sup>136</sup> Ninety percent of counties in the United States did not have an abortion clinic in 2014.<sup>137</sup> As of 2018, six states have only one abortion provider in the entire state.<sup>138</sup> ■

*Taken in the wider context of an ongoing culture of harassment and violence, these measures are working as intended—to curtail abortion access.*



# CONCLUSION

**THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE** in state legislatures has dramatically changed in recent years. Reproductive health, rights, and justice advocates are contending with a sophisticated state-level anti-abortion infrastructure that is a logical outgrowth of decades of ideological, organizational, and coalitional changes across a wide range of the religious and political Right. This includes a mature network of state and federal policy shops, litigation firms, activist trainings, and support organizations. Relationships among some key anti-abortion allies have grown stronger, notably the more formal alignment of the Christian Right with Roman Catholic Bishops and the institutional Church. All of this is taking place in the context of a robust state-level infrastructure that serves other elements of the political and corporate right, epitomized by the State Policy Network.

Pro-life march in McAllen, Texas  
in front of Whole Women's Health,  
January 21, 2017. SOURCE: B  
CHRISTOPHER/ALAMY LIVE NEWS

*As reproductive health, rights,  
and justice advocates respond to the  
current threats to bodily autonomy,  
how do we counter an opposition that  
successfully employs fundamentally  
undemocratic strategies and tactics?*

The states in turn draw on strategic resources at the national level, including the so-called bill mills of Americans United for Life and the National Right to Life Committee; a two-way state/national talent pipeline; litigation support from Alliance Defending Freedom and others; and voter identification, education, development, and get out the vote efforts led by United in Purpose and other electoral entities. Fortified evangelical-Catholic Right coalitions amplify anti-abortion efforts to control the public policy debate in most of the country and to advance a remarkable amount of legislation. The Christian Right has been able to advance its agenda via candidates that run on other platforms, such as the Tea Party's fiscal conservatism or Donald Trump's racist nationalism. The GOP control of many state legislatures has given it inordinate control over state policy—

as we have seen following the redrawing of state and federal legislative districts after the 2010 census, and we may see again after 2020.<sup>139</sup>

Over the past several decades, the Christian Right has invested in building a political and policy infrastructure that can quickly respond to changing political circumstances. During the past two years the anti-abortion movement's strategic focus has shifted, and the movement is now in a position to make tactical adjustments to the changing ideological balance of power on the Supreme Court. Through legislation that seeks to prohibit abortion at the earliest stages of pregnancy and so-called trigger bans that would restrict or ban abortion if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, the Christian Right is now closer to eliminating the legal protections for abortion than at any time since the Court's landmark decision in 1973.<sup>140</sup>

The net result of these developments culminate in the devastating, successful implementation of plans to eliminate abortion access. Facing these losses, those defending abortion rights need to learn from the other side and realize we face an opponent that has the ability to change.

The Christian Right has successfully implemented and made their movement real. As reproductive health, rights, and justice advocates respond to the current threats to bodily autonomy, how do we counter an opposition that successfully employs fundamentally undemocratic strategies and tactics to achieve policy objectives and goals? How do we make the case that the goals of racial, economic, and environmental justice are interconnected with the goals of reproductive justice, and engage with communities to build coalitions? How do reproductive health, rights, and justice advocates forge an intersectional movement that centers marginalized communities and focuses strategic goals and tactical objectives "to build streams of organizational development that come together into a single river of change"?<sup>141</sup> ■

# GLOSSARY

## **Christian Nationalism**

The contemporary idea that the U.S. was founded as and intended by God to be a Christian nation. This idea is an important ideological premise of the Christian Right, which claims it is seeking to restore or reclaim this mandate. This claim on the intent of God, the mission of the colonial settlers, and the Founders of the United States some 150 years later is used to justify contemporary political and policy views. The Christian nationalist vision has been used, for example by theologian Francis Schaeffer, to justify the anti-abortion movement and by the advocates of Dominionism to advance a theocratic society.

## **Christian Right**

A broad religious and political movement that emerged in the 1970s, primarily in the United States. The movement encompasses a wide swath of conservative Catholicism and Protestant evangelicalism. The movement today is one of the most dynamic and influential segments of the Right, and one of the most powerful social and political movements in U.S. history. It plays a decisive role in the Republican Party, and is sometimes influential in the Democratic Party as well. It played an important role in the election of Donald Trump and has had important influence in developing policy in his administration.

## **Dominionism**

The theocratic idea that regardless of theological view or eschatological timetable, Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over society by taking control of political and cultural institutions. Competes in Christianity with the idea of Stewardship, which suggests custodial care rather than absolute power. Some use the term interchangeably with Christian Reconstructionism, however it also applies to the theocratic vision of the neo-Charismatic New

Apostolic Reformation (NAR), whose founding leader was the late theologian C. Peter Wagner. While Christian Reconstructionism is acknowledged by Wagner as helping to shape the Dominionism of NAR, the Latter Rain Movement in Pentecostalism in the 1940s is also one of its roots. The fusion of these roots has found its most recent expression as the “Seven Mountains Mandate.”

## **New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)**

A movement originally organized by evangelical theologian C. Peter Wagner, that is the leading political and cultural vision of the Pentecostal and Charismatic wing of evangelical Christianity. NAR is Dominionist, and seeks to influence and ultimately control seven spheres or “mountains” of society: government, business, education, religion, arts & entertainment, family, and media.

## **Religious Freedom / Religious Liberty**

The liberatory idea that people’s religious views should be neither an advantage or a disadvantage under the law. Historically, it has also meant that people should be able to make up their own mind, free from the undue influence of powerful governmental and religious institutions. It is in this sense that the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state is intended to protect religious freedom. Freedom of religion is the first of three freedoms listed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, followed by freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It is recognized as a universal human right in several United Nations treaties.

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