

# GENDER ~~JUSTICE~~ IN ACTION



FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

# Hello Friends,



As I reflect on the enormous changes of the past year, I am thinking of what I saw on July 17th. More than ten thousand Minnesotans made signs and joined us for a historic rally at the State Capitol following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision that ended the federal right to abortion. Some messages were funny, like "Abort the Court!" Others were straight to the point, like "Abortion is healthcare." But the sign I saw that sticks with me now simply said, "We can't go back." This means, of course, that we must not return to a way of life when abortion was illegal in many places—difficult, dangerous, and even deadly to obtain. But over the past several months, the phrase has changed for me; I see it now as a roadmap to new possibilities. *Roe* is gone, and we can't go back to what was always just one fragile defense against relentless assaults on reproductive freedom and abortion care. We can't go back to pretending that as long as the federal right to abortion is intact, abortion is assured, accessible, and affordable for all people who need it. The hard truth is, *Roe* was never enough. We can't go back to being a movement forever on the defensive in the courtroom, rather than one dreaming big and organizing powerfully for expansive, intersectional, and holistic reproductive justice—including, but also beyond, abortion.

“  
**We can't go back,  
so we must go  
forward. And  
Gender Justice is  
leading the way.**  
”

*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* is a heartbreaking and devastating loss. But it also presents the opportunity to build a new future—one that is stronger and more just than ever before. We can't go back, so we must go forward. And Gender Justice is leading the way. As I stood on the front steps of the State Capitol in July, watching a neverending stream of people coming together for abortion access, I knew we were ready for what comes next.

As I wrote in last year's newsletter, Gender Justice was prepared for the likely outcome that the majority conservative Supreme Court would overturn *Roe*. But we did not just wait for that to happen, nor were we complacent in the knowledge that abortion is a guaranteed right in Minnesota under our state constitution. Instead, back in 2019, Gender Justice and our partner The Lawyering Project laid the groundwork to increase access to abortion here in Minnesota by filing our landmark lawsuit, *Doe v. Minnesota*, which challenged Minnesota's numerous

abortion restriction laws as unconstitutional. And just weeks after *Dobbs* was handed down, the court in *Doe* in large part agreed, issuing the most sweeping reassertion of abortion rights in Minnesota in a generation. Judge Thomas A. Gilligan ruled that the vast majority of Minnesota's abortion restrictions were unconstitutional—including the two-parent notification law for minors, the 24-hour mandatory delay, the ban on qualified clinicians providing abortion care, the law requiring providers to recite disinformation about abortion to patients, and more—and permanently blocked their enforcement. As swiftly as the U.S. Supreme Court took away the right to an abortion on the federal level, here in Minnesota, access to abortion care became stronger.

As an intersectional organization, Gender Justice is not focused solely on abortion rights, but on a broad vision of gender equity for all people. So as we fought to end unconstitutional restrictions on abortion, we also filed a lawsuit against the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) on behalf of our client, Christina

Lusk, a transgender woman in DOC custody who is being held in a men's facility, rather than a women's facility where she belongs. We brought cases on emergency contraception and the rights of nursing mothers to trial. We unveiled our toolkit, "Cool 4 School," to educate transgender students and their families on their rights at school, and more.

**We were able to secure these huge wins and bravely take on new fights because of our supporters and partners, who have come with us every step of the way.** Together, we have the broad vision, strategy, and drive to keep going even when we experience defeats. We know we can't go back, only forward—to a better future where everyone, no matter their sex, gender, or gender expression, is able to grow, love, and thrive.

Let's build it together.



## Why I Give to Gender Justice

I am an internist and pediatrician, and also a mom. It is really important to me that my kids—and, really, every single kid—have the opportunity to grow up in a world where they are valued just as they are. I believe that Gender Justice as an organization promotes just that. I was first drawn to Gender Justice because of their work to ensure the rights of transgender people in Minnesota. Since that time, I have been thrilled to learn about the other areas in which Gender Justice works to promote rights: reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, economic justice, and freedom from violence. In addition to sharing the values of the organization, I also donate because I believe in how effective the work has been.

In fighting for people's rights, Gender Justice has won really important cases. And in addition to the legal

work they do, they educate. I myself have learned so much from the outreach the organization has done. I have learned about different cases that are happening around the country, and what they mean for people's everyday lives. I've also learned about legislation that is being proposed here in Minnesota, why the legislation is important, what effects it might have, and strategies to advocate for it. I will continue to donate because I see that Gender Justice really cares about the things that I care about. I make recurring monthly gifts to help sustain this fight for people's rights. **I am excited to watch this organization continue to create the world I hope for for my children.**

**Calla Brown, MD**  
(she/her/hers)



## The End of *Roe*

On June 24th, just hours after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the constitutional right to abortion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, over a thousand people gathered outside the federal courthouse in downtown Minneapolis at a rally organized by Gender Justice and UnRestrict Minnesota partners. Together we told stories, sang, chanted, and, led by Rev. Kelli Clement of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, channeled our anger, shock, and grief into one collective scream that echoed off the buildings around us. "Thanks, I needed that," Rev. Clement joked when we were finished. She added, "When you do that alone, know that you are not alone. As you look around you, these are the people who are with you."

**Although it has only been a few months since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, the effects have been devastating.**

Immediately, trigger bans on abortion sprang into effect in Texas, Louisiana, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and a half-dozen other states. Twenty-seven states have since passed some type of ban on abortion or are poised to do so soon, and a federal ban on abortion was recently introduced in the U.S. Senate. In states where abortion is now illegal, people experiencing pregnancy complications have been subjected to delayed or denied medical care due to providers' fears of being prosecuted for abortion.



Patients trying to fill prescriptions to treat cancer, PTSD, and arthritis have been turned away because their medications can also be used for abortion. Even in states like Minnesota where abortion remains legal, clinics are facing an influx of patients traveling from all regions of the country to obtain abortion care legally, which has led to increased wait times for scheduling appointments.

In this post-*Roe* world, our work is more important than ever. As we gathered outside the courthouse on June 24th, the message from the speakers, the signs, and the hundreds of faces in the crowd was the same: we are in this fight together and we are ready for what comes next. Eliza O'Brien, manager of Whole Woman's Health clinic in Bloomington, summed up this spirit when she shared her coworkers' reaction when news of *Dobbs* broke. **"After we shed a few communal tears, we wiped them and we took a deep breath, and we got to work. Because we have to give the same care to the patients we saw yesterday and to the patients we saw today."**

# ★ A Major Win ★

## for Abortion Access - *Doe v. Minnesota*

Just weeks after the *Dobbs* decision that eliminated the federal right to abortion, Gender Justice, along with our co-counsel The Lawyering Project, secured a huge victory for abortion rights here in Minnesota when a Ramsey County district court ruled in *Doe v. Minnesota* that numerous state laws restricting abortion violated the Minnesota Constitution. *Doe v. Minnesota* was filed in May 2019 in Minnesota's Second Judicial District. Plaintiffs Our Justice, Dr. Doe, and Mary Moe—an abortion fund and two health care providers—argued that Minnesota's abortion restrictions harmed their patients and clients.

**In the court's July 11th summary judgment decision, Ramsey County District Court Judge Thomas A. Gilligan ruled that the majority of Minnesota's abortion restrictions were unconstitutional and permanently blocked their enforcement.**

These laws include: a ban on qualified non-physician practitioners performing abortions; the two-parent notification requirement for minors; the 24-hour waiting period; the requirement that doctors recite a script of misleading information about abortion to patients; a ban on the provision of second trimester abortion care outside of hospitals; and regulations that subject abortion providers to felony criminal penalties for minor regulatory infractions.

The court held that the Minnesota Constitution protects not just the fundamental right to decide

to have an abortion, but also the fundamental right to access abortion care without government interference, noting that “[t]he right to choose to have an abortion . . . would be meaningless without the right to access abortion.”

*Doe v. Minnesota* is the culmination of three and a half years of hard work by Gender Justice and our partners—made possible by supporters like you—to undo laws designed to increase costs, shame patients, and intimidate providers.

“Three and a half years ago, Gender Justice and our clients understood that the fight to protect abortion rights rests in the states,” Gender Justice Legal Director Jess Braverman said. “Now, just weeks after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, we are one step closer to removing harmful, outdated, and unconstitutional restrictions on abortion care here in Minnesota.”

# Our Future: March for Abortion Access

On July 17th, UnRestrict Minnesota and coalition partners from across the region organized a historic day of action to demand abortion rights and access in Minnesota, mobilizing thousands of people from across the state and beyond. Gathering at Saint Paul College that morning, we shared stories, pictures, markers, water bottles, music, and dance moves. In the heat and the rain, we marched down John Ireland Boulevard—more than ten thousand strong—to the steps of the State Capitol. There, we heard from lawmakers, storytellers, faith leaders, health care providers, musicians, poets, and artists. Most importantly, we heard from each other: bearing witness to each other's histories and sharing in each other's visions of the future.

**“We have to tell the truth,”**

said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan in her remarks.

**“That abortion is health care, that abortion is a right.”**

“We have to tell the truth,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan in her remarks. “That abortion is health care, that abortion is a right. And that we won’t go quietly off into the night; we will march in the thousands to say that we will not go backwards.”

It was a powerful example of the collective power of our movement—proof that together, we can build a pathway forward. Now is the time to fight to protect and expand reproductive health, rights, and justice in Minnesota. As people from across the nation are looking to Minnesota as a leader in abortion care and access, we will rise to the challenge. The Our Future Rally was a glimpse of the future we have already started to build: one grounded in a shared commitment to reproductive freedom, where every person seeking abortion in Minnesota can get the care they need.









# Minnesota Beyond *Roe*:

## The Leadership Agenda for Abortion Access

Just hours after the *Dobbs* decision came down, UnRestrict Minnesota, along with the Reproductive Freedom Caucus of state legislators, released Minnesota Beyond *Roe*: The Leadership Agenda for Abortion Access. This policy framework outlines concrete, strategic steps our movement will take to ensure that Minnesota meets this moment as a leader on abortion access.

For too many pregnant people, abortion care has always been out of reach, even when *Roe v. Wade* was the law of the land. As abortion bans prevent access to this health care, the burden falls hardest on people of color, undocumented people, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, young people, people with low incomes, and people who live in rural areas.



On Friday, June 24th, UnRestrict Minnesota announced “Minnesota Beyond *Roe*: The Leadership Agenda for Abortion Access,” alongside members of the legislature’s Reproductive Freedom Caucus.





The Leadership Agenda focuses on three main areas of action: repealing Minnesota's unnecessary restrictions on abortion care; protecting patients and providers from post-*Roe* attacks; and ensuring equitable and affordable access to abortion care.

**Through the strength of our coalition, the UnRestrict Minnesota campaign is preparing to advance our Leadership Agenda in the upcoming 2023 legislative session. This will include:**

- **Advancing legislation like the Patients Right to Know Act and the Protect Reproductive Options (PRO) Act**
- **Hosting opportunities for people to connect with lawmakers through events like our annual Reproductive Freedom Lobby Day**
- **Advocacy on state rules and regulations, including:**
  - **Improving Medicaid reimbursement for abortion care**
  - **Protecting health care providers from out-of-state threats**
  - **Convening funds and providers to coordinate service delivery**

We can advance this bold plan with your support and alongside our community partners, legislators, and all levels of government in Minnesota. Together, we will dismantle barriers to abortion care; ensure the privacy, safety, and personal freedom of people seeking an abortion; and lead the way toward a new vision for reproductive health, rights, and justice for our state—and for the United States after *Roe*.

**If you're not already signed up as a supporter of UnRestrict Minnesota ([unrestrictmn.org](https://unrestrictmn.org)), sign up today so you can help advocate for this bold agenda!**

# Our Fight for Bodily Autonomy

While the fallout from the *Dobbs* decision reverberated throughout the nation, we continued to fight for gender equity and bodily autonomy on other fronts, including going to trial to protect the rights of breastfeeding mothers and people seeking emergency contraception. And we're preparing for trial in our case to secure the rights of trans athletes to compete in sports.

At Gender Justice, our approach has always been intersectional and expansive, advancing a vision for gender equity that isn't centered on one issue. This allows us to meet defeats like *Dobbs* creatively and powerfully. We are building a world where every person has bodily autonomy and agency—whether they are seeking an abortion, trying to stay safe in government custody, or simply wanting to live their own lives, build their families, and pursue their dreams.

# Transgender Rights in School – An Update on Matt

*As we see attacks on transgender and LGBTQ rights increase, we all could use some good news. Our work matters. It changes lives. And thanks to Gender Justice supporters and donors, we are making progress on LGBTQ equity, despite what we might feel after reading headlines.*

When Matt was a student at Buffalo Community Middle School, he informed his school that he was transgender. He was then assigned bathroom facilities no other student had to use, isolating him and eventually leading to his removal from physical education classes. In 2019, Gender Justice, along with co-counsel Best & Flanagan, LLP, sued the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District, arguing that the district violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act and the Minnesota Constitution by failing to provide Matt with a safe and equitable learning environment.

Our lawsuit resulted in Matt receiving a compensatory settlement from the school district. The district also agreed to create and implement new protections for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students, ensuring that they can access facilities and play on sports teams that align with their gender identity, and that school officials refer to them by their proper names and pronouns.

Matt's mom, Helene, recently reached out to Gender Justice to give us an update on how Matt has been doing since then:

*First, I just want you to know that all your efforts were amazingly impactful on Matt. As you may recall, he missed a full middle school education and did not like high school. He was truant a lot. It seemed unlikely he would graduate with his class. After the settlement however, he really felt the validation and decided to move forward. This last year not only did he finish all his senior classes with mostly A's and B's, he caught up on the three prior years of incomplete or missing credits. He did this while working two jobs. He didn't think he could get into college, but I did get him to apply to two, and he was accepted to both.*

*Right now he plans to take a year and learn to live on his own while continuing to work. Then he will go to a technical college for an Associate of Fine Arts degree.*

*Matt is doing great and we are all so proud of him. But I think it is important you know that not only are you making really important systems changes, you helped a very traumatized little boy regain control of his own life, learn to love himself again, and see a future for himself. He is alive, thanks in part to all your efforts, and for that I am most grateful.*

**Thank you, Helene, for sharing Matt's story! And thank you to our friends and supporters who make wins like this possible.**

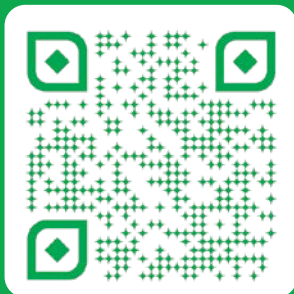


# Cool 4 School Toolkit Launch

Matt's journey shows how important it is for all kids to feel safe and supported in school, so they can go on to achieve their dreams. So how can we ensure that school remains a safe, welcoming, and learning-oriented space for them? By following the law and continuing to uplift these young individuals and their families. ***Every student deserves to be protected from violence and harassment, regardless of their gender or gender identity.***

This year, we launched an updated Trans Toolkit called "Cool 4 School" that contains Know Your Rights resources, advocacy letters, and more. Legal protections don't automatically end discrimination against trans students, but they do give students and their families a powerful tool to fight against it. Join us in spreading the word to students, educators, and communities throughout Minnesota about legal protections for transgender students at school!

Scan this code to access the toolkit:



## COOL 4 SCHOOL

### GENDER JUSTICE

As representation and research of gender expansiveness continues to grow, **more youth** are able to identify themselves as transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, two-spirit, and more. An inclusive education environment isn't just a suggestion - **it's the law.**

#### MENTAL HEALTH

In 2021, 31% of MN trans youth attempted suicide - compared to 8% of their peers. **HOWEVER** -> data shows when identities are supported, mental health increases.

48% of nat'l trans youth feel supported when their names/pronouns are used

62% of nat'l LGBTQIA+ youth feel supported when loved ones support other LGBTQIA+ people

#### PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that one may substitute for a noun (i.e. a name.) He, She, They, We, and Us are all pronouns! It's respectful to ask and use the pronouns an individual prefers.

#### TRANS RIGHTS

MN schools have a legal obligation to treat ALL students with respect in an inclusive environment. It is your **legal right** to:

- Use restrooms, locker rooms, & other facilities that align with your gender identity
- Join teams and activities that align with your gender identity
- Be addressed by your name & pronouns

**Schools must address harassment, bullying, and intimidation of any student based on their gender, gender identity, or gender expression.** Students and advocates don't have to convince schools that preventing discrimination is the "nice thing to do" - It's simply the law.

#### FRIENDS & FAM

##### SPEAK UP!

Peers, parents, educators, school boards, staff: **Use your voice.** Visit our website for advocacy letter templates, resources, and more to help you become a stronger advocate. Be proactive in advocating for LGBTQIA+ youth in your community!

#### LEARN MORE

The Minnesota Constitution and Minnesota Human Rights Act explicitly protects trans individuals from discrimination. For more information, including resources and legal rights, **← SCAN THIS CODE.**

# Through the Law –

## Updates from our legal team

### Trans people in government custody must be treated with dignity

Gender Justice, along with Robins Kaplan LLP, has filed a lawsuit against the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) on behalf of Christina Lusk, a trans woman in DOC custody. Although Christina is socially, medically, and legally recognized as female, the DOC has refused to house her at a women's facility where she belongs, instead placing her in a men's facility where she is being subjected to discrimination and harassment. The DOC also refuses to acknowledge Christina's legal name and has denied her medically necessary, gender-affirming health care—all because she is transgender. In early June 2022, we filed suit, arguing that the DOC's treatment of Christina violates the Minnesota Human Rights Act and the Minnesota Constitution. People in government custody should be protected and treated with dignity—not targeted for discrimination, harassment, and abuse.



### Pharmacist refusals of emergency contraception are discriminatory

Gender Justice and co-counsel Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP's lawsuit on behalf of Andrea Anderson against Thrifty White went to trial in August 2022. Ms. Anderson sought to fill a prescription for emergency contraception in 2019 at both McGregor Pharmacy (formerly Thrifty White) and a second pharmacy, but was denied her medication on the basis of the pharmacists' religious beliefs. As a result, she was forced to drive with her young child for hours through a snowstorm to find a pharmacy that would provide her with the medication. At trial, the jury concluded that the pharmacy did not discriminate against Ms. Anderson, though the jury also found that the pharmacist-in-chief caused Ms. Anderson emotional harm, imposing damages of \$25,000. We are disappointed in this outcome, but the case is not over. We will appeal the decision to the Minnesota Court of Appeals to ensure Minnesota patients can access the health care they need without the interference of providers prioritizing their personal beliefs over the needs of their patients.



## Trans athletes have a right to compete according to their gender identity

Gender Justice, Nichols Kaster, PLLP, and Premo Frank PLLC are representing JayCee Cooper, a transgender athlete, in a lawsuit against USA Powerlifting (USAPL). In 2018, JayCee applied to compete in two USAPL state powerlifting competitions and was denied entry because she is transgender. Following this, USAPL instituted a policy banning all trans women from participating in its competitions. In 2021, we filed a lawsuit against USAPL and USAPL Minnesota, arguing that these actions were discriminatory under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. In spring 2023, we are headed to trial. Trans athletes should have the same protections and opportunities as all athletes: the right to take their years of training into the arena



and compete at the best of their ability without fear of discrimination, stigma, or exclusion. This trial will allow us to make sure trans athletes like JayCee are protected from discrimination and that sports governing bodies treat all athletes fairly, regardless of their gender identity. As JayCee put it, without human rights in sports, who are they really for?

# SAVE THE DATE

## DECEMBER 1, 2022 12-1 PM

*“How religion is being used to expand and limit civil rights”.*


***Register at [genderjustice.us/cle-2022](https://genderjustice.us/cle-2022)***

*CLE credit is available*

**Thank you  
to Nichols  
Kaster, PLLP  
for sponsoring  
this event!**




**Nichols Kaster**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW




# Bodily Autonomy

by Guest Writer Dianna Anderson



In the 1990s, anti-abortion activists unleashed a wave of terror against doctors and clinics that performed abortions across the United States and Canada. Some groups published maps of clinics that provided care and enlisted groups of activists to stand outside and “preach” at patients. Still others created “Wanted” posters for the doctors, publishing home addresses and private telephone numbers, which led to ongoing harassment and threats of violence. Some of those threats were followed through on, with several doctors, nurses, and staff injured or killed throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

So when anti-trans activists began to target doctors who provide gender affirming care, even posting maps of gender affirming clinics online, many of us in the trans community saw the writing on the wall. The same battles were starting over again, but this time, instead of images of stillbirths blown up 100x to “shock” passersby, anti-trans protesters displayed pictures of mastectomies done on trans masculine people, with scars darkened to highlight the lines across the chest.





Both anti-abortion and anti-trans activists (and often there is a large overlap in these groups) argue that those who go through these medical procedures will regret it. Anti-trans activists predict there will be a wave of what are called “detransitioners”—people who come out as trans and then later realize it is not for them. Studies show that less than 1% of people who medically transition regret doing so, and often those who detransition for a time will retransition later when it is safer for them to do so (Caitlyn Jenner is perhaps one of the most famous examples of this, having attempted to transition in the late '80s, only to recloset when it wasn't feasible to be public about it).

The arguments all look exactly the same because they come from the same place: a lack of respect and understanding of bodily autonomy, a belief that marginalized bodies are spaces for public discourse, and a belief that the state should intervene in private medical decisions.

**It is the same story of misogyny and patriarchy as old as time—your assigned sex at birth determines what role you will play in society, and you cannot and should not challenge that role.**

Any self-determination, any valuing of oneself outside of those specific traditionalist values is an affront to the way they believe the world should be.

The reason we're seeing anti-trans activists work from the same anti-abortion playbook is because the argument is the same: other people should get to decide what happens to your body

if they believe your assigned sex at birth places you in a specific role in a patriarchal society. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas even nodded toward this in his concurrence in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, writing that the court has a duty to “correct the error” present in *Griswold* (the birth control decision), *Lawrence* (decision ruling the state could not make sodomy illegal) and, yes, *Obergefell*, the landmark decision that legalized marriage equality. What Justice Thomas seeks to “correct” is not improper legal precedent, but what he sees as inappropriately permissive rulings for those whose sexual identity makes them second class citizens. Cisgender women controlling their reproduction, men sleeping with other men, and trans people challenging the idea that what's between your legs determines who you are—all are a threat to the established patriarchy.

This is why abortion clinics and doctors who provide gender affirming care share solidarity in this fight. The same ideology that led to clinic bombings in the 1990s is motivating tactics like people calling in bomb threats to Boston Children's Hospital after a popular anti-LGBT Twitter account posted misinformation about their gender affirming care program. The principle of bodily autonomy that allowed me to get a masculinizing mastectomy is the same principle that allows pregnant people to control their reproduction. We are together in this and always will be.

*Dianna Anderson is the author of IN TRANSIT: Being Non-binary in a World of Dichotomies.*



# Introducing **GENDER JUSTICE ACTION**

***GENDER JUSTICE ACTION WORKS TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUITY THROUGH MEANINGFUL POLITICAL ACTION.***

The obstacles to realizing our goals of gender justice have reached a new order of magnitude. U.S. politics, policymaking, and the judicial system have been infected by extreme right-wing ideology. To meet this moment, the team at Gender Justice launched a new 501(c) 4 political division of our work, “Gender Justice Action” with a subsidiary program “UnRestrict Minnesota Action.”

Through targeted electoral strategies and long-term organizing, Gender Justice Action is laying the groundwork to pass proactive policy and expand access to abortion, contraception, and LGBTQ+ rights.

## **2022 ELECTION**

This fall, our organizing team is focused on educating and turning out voters who could tip the election in favor of reproductive freedom champions in the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision. Our UnRestrict Minnesota Action team is expanding beyond traditional electoral strategies by engaging young people and LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities in key districts where gender equity champions in tough races could help us win a pro-reproductive freedom majority in the state House and Senate.

## **BEYOND THE ELECTION**

This work doesn’t end on Election Day. Regardless of the results, your support will help ensure we can show up every day at the Legislature—with the strength of millions of Minnesotans behind us—to advocate for gender equity. Gender Justice Action is ready to engage reproductive justice champions in our work to pass the Minnesota Beyond *Roe* Leadership Agenda, which would repeal unnecessary restrictions, protect patients and medical providers, and ensure equitable and affordable access to abortion care.



**We need your help to get this done! Join us with a gift or sign up to volunteer today! Your donation and involvement will help win real progress towards gender equity and ensure all Minnesotans have access to reproductive health care.**

**[genderjustice.us/action](https://genderjustice.us/action)**

# Action on Crisis Pregnancy Centers

On August 23, 2022, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison issued a consumer advisory alert about Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), anti-abortion organizations that use deceptive marketing and disinformation to mislead clients and prevent them from obtaining abortions. The consumer alert highlighted these practices and advised pregnant people to do their own research before seeking out CPCs, which outnumber abortion clinics 11 to 1 in Minnesota.

**AG Ellison's consumer alert drew on a 2021 report co-authored by Gender Justice and our partners in *The Alliance: State Advocates for Women's Rights & Gender Equality*. This groundbreaking report, "Designed to Deceive: A Study of the Crisis Pregnancy Center Industry in Nine States", exposed how CPCs provide few or no real medical services and systematically misrepresent the services they do provide. It also described how CPCs specifically target pregnant people of color and pregnant people with lower incomes.**

The impact of our report did not stop with the Minnesota consumer alert. The attorneys general of California and Massachusetts issued similar advisory warnings in their states. Senator Elizabeth Warren delivered remarks on the Senate floor condemning CPCs' deceptive practices and introduced the Stop Anti-Abortion Disinformation (SAD) Act, which would allow the Federal Trade Commission to regulate CPCs' advertising practices. State-level bills aimed at regulating CPCs have also been introduced in a handful of states since 2021, with one signed into law in Connecticut.

The Alliance followed up on this report in February of 2022 with an urgent brief focused on a new role CPCs are poised to play now that *Roe* has been struck down: providing surveillance for the anti-abortion movement. By collecting and storing client data in a proprietary anti-abortion movement platform, CPCs contribute to one mega-database for the entire movement—a major threat to the privacy of clients seeking essential health care.

This latest brief and related press coverage have also been generating results. Most notably, a group of Senate Democrats wrote a letter to Heartbeat International, the country's largest network of crisis pregnancy centers, requesting more information about how client data is collected, stored, and shared. In June of 2022, a bill was also introduced in Pennsylvania to bar CPCs from sharing client data without their permission, which cited our brief as an addendum.

Both before and after *Dobbs*, our research and reporting on CPCs has had a critical impact. By continuing to shine a light on CPCs' predatory practices, Gender Justice and our partners are expanding public awareness and helping shape government response so that pregnant people can access the health care they need, without giving up their privacy, safety, or autonomy. We are also working with legislative leaders to address the millions of dollars MN has spent propping up CPC's problematic practices.

## Supporter Survey

Your input is important to us. Could you fill out a brief survey to help strengthen our work for gender equity?

[genderjustice.us/survey](https://genderjustice.us/survey)





# Fresh Faces

## Welcoming New Staff

---



**ERIN HART, She/Her**  
Communications Director

Erin Hart joins Gender Justice to lead our communications team, develop strategic messaging, and lift up our work to new audiences at a critical moment for gender equity. Erin previously worked as Communications Director for the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project and the Germanic-American Institute, where she helped grow the nonprofits' reach to national and international audiences. She also served as a diplomat overseas with the U.S. State Department.

---



**ABENA ABRAHAM, She/Her**  
UnRestrict Minnesota Campaign Director

Abena Abraham comes to UnRestrict Minnesota with years of experience in advocacy, campaigning, and the coordination of people around a unified movement. Abena has served in a range of organizing positions throughout her career, from presidential campaigns to organizing with the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE). She also co-founded the Black Immigrant Collective, a collective that works at the intersection of Blackness and Immigration. As Campaign Director, Abena brings expertise in electoral and legislative advocacy and relationship-building that will drive the work of UnRestrict Minnesota forward.

---



**GRACE MOORE, She/Her**  
Saeks Public Interest Legal Fellow

Grace Moore is a Saeks Public Interest Legal Fellow. Before Gender Justice, Grace worked at a legal services organization serving survivors of intimate partner violence and at a nonprofit dedicated to ending gender-based violence through legal and policy advocacy. She is in her last year at the University of Minnesota Law School, and after graduation she will continue working at Gender Justice as an attorney through her fellowship.

---



**JESSICA NYMAN, She/Her**  
Civic Engagement Director

Jessica comes to Gender Justice Action with extensive experience in political strategy, state lobbying, policy development, and electoral campaign management. Prior to starting with Gender Justice Action, Jessica was part of the Government and Public Affairs team at the Minnesota Nurses Association.



## BOARD

Biftu Bussa  
Summra Shariff  
Amanda Bartschenfeld  
Thomas Fiebiger  
Amanda Furst  
Mai Thor  
Ann Tobin  
CB Baga  
Hetal Dalal  
David Schlesinger  
Iman Hassan  
Elizabeth Glidden  
Melissa Harl  
Sarah Clyne  
EJ Dean  
Wintana Melekin  
Binta Kanteh

## STAFF

Megan Peterson - Executive Director  
Tana Hargest - Deputy Director  
Erin Maye Quade - Advocacy Director  
Jess Braverman - Legal Director  
Christy Hall - Senior Staff Attorney  
Michelle Hesterberg - Development Director  
Erin Hart - Communications Director  
Abena Abraham - UnRestrict Minnesota Campaign Director  
Jessica Nyman - Civic Engagement Director  
Grace Reardon - Project Manager  
Grace Moore - Saeks Public Interest Legal Fellow  
Ayana Smith-Kooiman - Advocacy Fellow

*Special thanks to writers and designers Audra Grigus, Amy Shebeck, Julie Zhou, and Colleen Russell*

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR INCREDIBLE DONORS!

The Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity  
Emergent Fund  
Ford Foundation  
Fund for Women and Girls of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation  
Headwaters Foundation for Justice  
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation  
Irving Harris Foundation  
Minnesota State Bar Foundation  
Nichols Kaster, PLLP

Northwest Minnesota Women's Fund  
Peace Coffee  
Proteus Fund  
Ramsey County Bar Foundation  
Smith Family Foundation  
Still Ain't Satisfied  
Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society  
Women's Foundation of Minnesota  
**And 3,554 more businesses and individuals, like you!**



ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH THE LAW

We've moved!

663 University Avenue W, Suite 200  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
651.789.2090  
Email: [info@genderjustice.us](mailto:info@genderjustice.us)

[www.GenderJustice.us](http://www.GenderJustice.us)  
[@GenderJustice](https://twitter.com/GenderJustice)

Nonprofit  
Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit # 7382

## UNRESTRICT MINNESOTA

### Are you a supporter of UnRestrict Minnesota?

As a supporter of UnRestrict Minnesota, we thought you'd like to check out this newsletter from coalition partner Gender Justice. Inside you'll find updates on the work we've been doing together to expand access to abortion in Minnesota.

If you're not yet a supporter of UnRestrict Minnesota, sign up to receive updates at [unrestrictmn.org/sign-up](http://unrestrictmn.org/sign-up)

You can advance gender equity. Give today.

DONATE AT  
[genderjustice.us/  
donate/](http://genderjustice.us/donate/)



Will you help fight  
for gender equity by  
making a gift to Gender  
Justice today?

Your donation will help us confront growing threats to gender equity and bodily autonomy, including attacks on abortion, contraception, trans students' rights, and gender-affirming care.

