



CRR Opposes Alaska Ballot Measure 2: Mandatory Parental Notification Endangers Teens

The Center for Reproductive Rights opposes Alaska Ballot Measure 2, which would require that before a young woman could obtain an abortion, one of her parents must be notified at least 48 hours in advance. Even for a young woman in an abusive home, the only way to avoid this notification would be to seek a court order or to get a signed, notarized statement from a law enforcement officer or one of a small qualifying group of family members attesting to *personal knowledge* of the abuse. Ballot Measure 2's mandate of parental notification interferes with families and places the most vulnerable young women in even more danger, at risk of violence or of endangering their health by taking matters into their own hands.

Most often, parents know when their daughters are facing an unintended pregnancy. Unfortunately, some young women have good reason to fear psychological and physical abuse, and may rightly be concerned that telling their parents about a pregnancy or abortion would precipitate a violent family crisis. By requiring that a parent be notified, Ballot Measure 2 will put teens in danger and will exacerbate unstable and dysfunctional family relationships.

The supporters of this measure claim that the law does not endanger minors because a young woman seeking an abortion could bypass the notification requirement with a court order or by getting a signed notarized statement about her abusive situation from a law enforcement officer or one of a few adult family members. But in reality, this law would force a young woman living in a violent home to delay needed medical care and to choose between going before a judge or trying to convince a local law enforcement officer or a family member that she is being abused. Minors in such family situations may not be able to pursue either option, out of fear or because they are too intimidated to access the court system or law enforcement. Meanwhile, they will be forced to delay their procedures while they consider how to navigate these difficult options. In fact, the Alaska Supreme Court has already recognized that the delay imposed by this type of law could “prove detrimental to the physical health of minors, particularly for minors in rural Alaska who already face logistical obstacles to obtaining an abortion” and that “not all minors possess the wherewithal to embark upon a formal legal adjudication during a time of crisis.”¹

Ballot Measure 2 is a mandate that interferes with family communication and would only serve to put Alaskan young women at risk. Alaska voters should reject this unnecessary and dangerous intrusion into their families' lives.

For more information on opposing Ballot Measure 2 and how to get involved, please visit the No on 2 Campaign at <http://noon2.org/home>.

¹ *State of Alaska v. Planned Parenthood of Alaska*, 171 P.3d 577, 584 (2007) (quotations omitted).