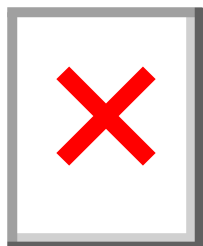


From: Women Rule <womenrule@email.politico.com>
Sent: Feb 07, 2025 16:12:48.000000000 UTC
Subject: How Trump's Immigration Blitz Will Change Maternal Health Care
To: jperperian@cityofmelrose.org <jperperian@cityofmelrose.org>

Feb 07, 2025

[View in browser](#)



BY EMMA CORDOVER

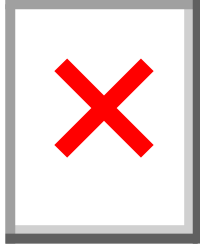


Illustration by Claudine Hellmuth/POLITICO (source images via iStock)

Hi Rulers, happy February. We made it to month two. Amidst a lot of immigration-related news this week, we take a look at how these changes are playing out for women.

Let's get into it:

On Tuesday, the Trump administration sent the first flight of deported migrants to Guantánamo Bay, after directing the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security last week to [prepare the American naval base in Cuba to hold up to 30,000 immigrants](#). (The facility is [currently equipped to hold 130](#).)

President **Donald Trump** has enacted a slew of immigration policy changes, including permitting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests at sensitive locations like schools, churches, courthouses and hospitals and

eliminating birthright citizenship for children born to undocumented immigrants — although [two judges have blocked the birthright order](#).

Trump has so far not deported more people than the Biden or Obama administrations did, but [the PR blitz around](#) his deportations is distinct. As a result, immigrants across the country are changing their routines, [keeping children home from school](#) and [skipping doctor's appointments](#).

There is a specific subset of those immigrants who could be uniquely impacted by these policies: pregnant people, who, under the current birthright citizenship laws, will be parents to American newborns.

“These executive orders would make this group of women, in particular the pregnant women who are unauthorized, or even those who have semi-legal status, very, very insecure,” says **Valerie Lacarte**, Senior Policy Analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank. “I would be very worried if I was an immigrant woman in the last few months of the pregnancy.”

Although birthright citizenship is in place, for now, Lacarte says pregnant immigrants, many of whom fled danger in their home countries, still face uncertainty around the implications of their child's citizenship status. New mothers may face especially difficult decisions on how to best care for their children.

Jessica Vaughan, Director of Policy Studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank which favors restricting immigration, says the only way to address this problem is to prevent it from happening in the first place. That means “by not having immigration policies that entice people to come here and put themselves at risk and make choices that are going to potentially put them in these difficult situations.”

Vaughan adds, “if our concern as a nation is healthy moms with healthy kids, including people outside of this country, then we can help a lot more people in their own country than tempting them to come here illegally.”

The fear around mass deportations is already affecting mothers in real time, says **Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner**, executive director and CEO of MomsRising, an on-the-ground organization of women with members across all 50 states.

“We're hearing about pregnant and postpartum women being especially harmed by this kind of toxic stress, having to miss important medical appointments,” Rowe-Finkbeiner says. “We're hearing of pregnant immigrant women having to skip prenatal exams, afraid to go to church or to the store to pick up healthy foods, vitamins and prescription medicines.”

Drishti Pillai, director of immigrant health policy at KFF, a nonprofit health policy research organization, adds that [data from Trump's first administration](#) demonstrates his immigration policies “led to growing reluctance among some families from participating in programs such as Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP or social service programs, either for themselves or for their children, most of whom are U.S.-born citizens, because they didn't want to draw attention to their immigration status.”

However, as Vaughan sees it, the fear is overblown and unwarranted. “If moms are refraining from accessing these programs, that is out of a fear that someone has given them. That's not what the government is doing.” Rather, she says, immigration advocacy groups are “whipping up fear in immigrant communities.”

Vaughan argues that undocumented mothers seeking care for their newborns are putting a financial strain on federal welfare programs. This is “an exact illustration of why illegal immigration is so costly to Americans,” she says. “This is a difficult situation for the migrants. It's also difficult for taxpayers who have less funding available to help Americans who need assistance.”

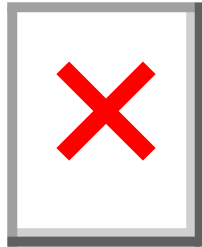
Noncitizens are [generally ineligible for federally-funded public benefits](#) like Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, [particularly if they are undocumented](#).

Pillai cites [a March 2024 report](#) from the Florida state Agency for Health Care Administration that found that in the second half of 2023, immigrants without legal status accounted for just [0.82 percent of hospital visits and 0.83 percent of emergency department visits](#).

“People foregoing primary and preventive health care out of immigration-related fears can lead to conditions getting worse and becoming more complex and expensive to treat later on,” Pillai says.

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POLITICO SPECIAL REPORT



Alex Brandon/AP

[Two Dem Lawmakers Barge Into House Speaker's Office in Backlash Against Musk](#) by **Benjamin Guggenheim** for POLITICO:

“Reps. **Judy Chu** (D-Calif.) and **Gwen Moore** (D-Wis.) barged into House Speaker **Mike Johnson**’s office unscheduled on Wednesday and challenged him about **Elon Musk**'s team gaining access to a sensitive payment system at the Treasury Department. Their intrusion, amid an escalation of Democratic backlash against Musk's sweep through the federal government, came shortly after Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent** arrived at the

speaker's office to discuss how to implement President **Donald Trump**'s tax agenda."

[Pam Bondi Issued a Flurry of Orders on Day 1 as Trump's](#)

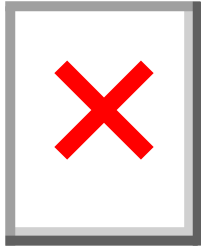
[Attorney General](#) by **Josh Gerstein** and **Erica Orden** for POLITICO:

"**Pam Bondi** is officially in control of the Justice Department — and she's gone right to work. President Donald Trump's attorney general issued a flurry of orders Wednesday just after she was sworn in, releasing 14 "first-day" directives. Among them, Bondi ordered the department to set up a task force to examine the "weaponization" of the Justice Department and rein in investigations into foreign influence. She also warned career lawyers at her agency not to try to thwart Trump administration policies."

[Here's What Folding USAID Into State Is Likely to Look Like](#) by

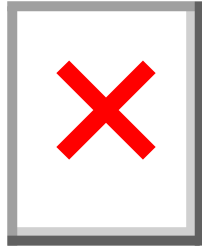
Eric Bazail-Eimil for POLITICO: "USAID is facing the same cuts as other agencies for programs seen as falling under 'diversity, equity and inclusion.' That would likely include programs boosting the rights of LGBTQ people and women's rights. The question is whether it would also extend to efforts to combat hatred against ethnic and religious minorities. The U.S. has supported 'inclusion' programs that combat workplace and societal discrimination in countries such as Serbia and Guatemala, which have witnessed genocides and crimes against humanity committed against indigenous and minority communities. Such programs in Serbia were already singled out by the Trump administration."

NUMBER OF THE WEEK



[Read more here.](#)

MUST READS



Buddhika Weerasinghe/Getty Images

[Where a Strongman Failed, Women Are Now Fueling a Democratic Revival](#) by **Mujib Mashal** and **Pamodi Waravita** for the New York Times: “It was a brief remark during a mundane session of Parliament. But to **Harini Amarasuriya**, Sri Lanka’s prime minister, it was the moment she realized that her country, wrecked not long ago by strongman leaders and their populist politics, had entered a potentially transformative moment for women. A male colleague (and “not a very feminist” one, as Dr. Amarasuriya described him) stood up to say that the island nation could not get more women into the formal work force unless it officially recognized the ‘care economy’ — work caring for others.”

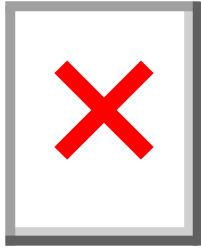
[Three Months After Missouri Voted to Make Abortion Legal, Access Is Still Being Blocked](#) by **Jeremy Kohler** for ProPublica: “This week, state lawmakers held a hearing on a conservative-backed plan to put a new amendment on the ballot that would block most abortions. If passed by the General Assembly, the measure could go to voters as soon as this year.

The [proposed amendment](#) would ban abortion except for in medical emergencies, when a fetus has abnormalities, or in cases of rape or incest, with rape or incest cases requiring a police report and subject to a 12-week limit. It would also prohibit public funding for abortions. What's more, it would ban providing surgeries, hormones or drugs to assist a child with a gender transition, procedures that are already illegal in Missouri.”

'We Do Not Exist Anymore': New Prison Rules Ban Female

Clothing for Trans Women by **Jaclyn Diaz** for NPR: “Transgender women in federal prisons are being told to hand over any female-identifying clothing and other commissary items, like women's razors and hair care, according to a new Bureau of Prisons policy obtained by NPR. The new rules are being implemented after an executive order from President Trump called on the bureau to move trans women out of women's federal prisons and end gender affirming care. That order is facing at [least two challenges](#) in federal court and late Tuesday, a judge in Washington, D.C., in one of the cases temporarily blocked the removal of three transgender women from a women's prison.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



[Read more here.](#)

ON THE MOVE

Rachel Cohrs Zhang will cover health care, politics and money for Bloomberg. She previously was chief Washington correspondent at Stat. (h/t POLITICO Playbook)

Laura Kemper is joining Jeffrey J. Kimbell & Associates as senior vice president of government affairs. She was most recently vice president and head of federal government affairs at Fresenius Medical Care and is an HHS and John Cornyn alum. (h/t POLITICO Influence)

Maddie Salamone is joining Pacific Legal Foundation's federal legal policy team. She previously was an attorney at Bentley Goodrich Kison. (h/t POLITICO Playbook)

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