



ACLU

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of ILLINOIS

What YOU should know about Illinois' Parental Notice Law

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Q: Do girls under age 18 have to tell their parents if they plan to get an abortion?

Because of a decision by the Cook County Circuit Court, the Illinois Parental Notice of Abortion Act will not be enforced until further notice.

This means that, for the time being, your doctor is NOT required to notify an adult family member before you can have an abortion. Minors who do not feel comfortable involving an adult family member in their abortion decision are allowed to have an abortion without doing so.

Q: What's wrong with involving parents in abortion decisions?

Some argue that forced parental involvement laws simply encourage family communication – something we all want. However, the notion that one can force such communication is based on false assumptions that ignore the realities of life for many teens and the lasting injuries resulting from the enforcement of these laws.

Rarely heard in this debate are these undisputed facts:

- Most young women tell a parent about an unintended pregnancy – indeed, the younger a teen, the more likely she is to involve a parent.
- Those who do not tell a parent usually involve another close family member or trusted adult.
- **When a teen does not tell her parents, there are strong reasons**, including: fear of physical or emotional abuse or of homelessness, fear of being forced to bear a child against her will, or other significant problems within the family such as a parental illness.

Forced parental involvement does nothing to increase or enhance family communication, and research shows that those young women who would not otherwise have involved a parent are most likely to suffer negative and harmful consequences.

Q: Where can I go for more information about parental notice in Illinois and updates on the ACLU's lawsuit?

Visit www.ilbypasscoordinationproject.org for the most current information or

Call **1-877-44BYPASS** between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m., 7 days a week.