

What Does "Top Talent" Think about Working in States that Ban Abortion?

Reactions to Abortion Bans among Workers in Ohio

October 14, 2021

PerryUndem conducted a robust national survey on the topics of attracting and retaining top talent and social values. Commissioned by Tara Health Foundation with support from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, the survey was conducted using YouGov's online panel among a national sample of n = 1,804 adults ages 18 to 64 with a college degree who are working full time or looking for full-time work, and an oversample of n = 429 respondents in Ohio. The purpose of the survey is to explore how "top talent" perceives the role of politics, social issues, and corporate values in their work and job choices.

This research highlights the impact on top talent given the focus by corporate America on talent mobility and recruitment. Bans like S.B. 8 disproportionately impact frontline workers who already face multiple barriers to accessing healthcare. This research is especially relevant given the outsized [role](#) business plays among the most trusted institutions in society according to the recent [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer](#). Recent business [media](#) and [commentary](#) in the wake of corporate [reactions](#) to S.B. 8 in Texas also underscores how access to reproductive health, including abortion, is a workforce and economic issue.

This memo outlines key findings related to abortion bans, such as Texas S.B. 8, the recent six-week ban and "abortion bounty" bill. Data suggest:

- Large majorities of top talent nationally, and in Ohio, support abortion access and consider the issue part of gender equity in the workplace;
- Nationally, two-thirds say the Texas ban would discourage them from taking a job in Texas (55% of Ohioans say the same, including 62% of Ohio women);
- 63% say they would not apply for a job in a state that passed a ban like Texas' (53% of Ohioans say the same, including 62% of Ohio women); and
- About half says they would consider moving out-of-state if their lawmakers passed a similar ban (40% of Ohioans say the same, including 45% of Ohio women).

Following are more details.

The college-educated workforce values abortion access and sees the issue as part of gender equity in the workplace.

Roughly eight in ten respondents (79%) do not want *Roe v. Wade* overturned (69% of top talent in Ohio). The same proportion (80%) feels access to abortion is an important part of women's rights and gender equity (65% among Ohio respondents) - 63% feel this strongly (52% of Ohioans).

Respondents also connect abortion to other issues. Top talent would guess that states with abortion access protections are more likely to have good health care, good-paying jobs, and a higher-quality of life versus states that ban or restrict access (65% v. 10% nationally; 51% v. 15% among Ohio respondents).

The survey asked respondents the following question:

Let's say politicians in a state ban abortion or pass several restrictions on abortion access. What would that tell you about what it might be like to live in that state?



Responses include:

- “Women are 2nd class citizens [there].” - Ohio woman
- “[It'd tell me that] government is too involved in personal affairs. Questionable separation between church and state. Poor education system in that state.” - Ohio man
- “I wouldn't even consider working there. I restrict my job search to states that protect rights of women, LGBTQ+, and POC.” - Ohio woman
- “That [the state] is likely to pass other discriminatory and exclusionary restrictions (trans rights, voting rights, anti-public health measures, etc.)” - Ohio woman
- “[I'd] rather not live in the state on the wrong side of history.” - Ohio man
- “It would tell me that I would likely not be welcomed in that state, because if they are this restrictive on abortion access, they will likely deny other rights to minorities.” - Ohio woman
- “It would be restrictive...what's the next thing the state will ban?” - Ohio man

Other survey respondents in the Midwest would take similar cues to abortion bans:

- “It would tell me that the state would not be willing to uphold the freedoms and rights that should be afforded to everyone. I don't think the blame lays on the people, but the government/legislature of the state that continues to exert its power in order to further subjugate Americans.” - Kentucky man
- “[It'd tell me that] education and the healthcare field in the state are probably underfunded and many people who live in the state do not share my values. Women in the state are not treated as equal to men.” - Pennsylvania woman
- “That there are going to be numerous restrictions in all areas of daily life that I'm not going to agree with, and would significantly lower my quality of life.” - Michigan man
- “They really don't care about women, women's issues, or families.” - Indiana woman
- “It would tell me that woman are not seen as equals and that men believe that they have a say over what woman can and cannot do. I would not want to live somewhere with this sort of culture.” - Michigan woman
- “I would not even consider moving to that state. I'm a member of the LGBTQ+ community. If they ban or restrict abortion access, they have already restricted (or never passed) positive/promoting legislation for my community and me.” - Michigan man
- “As a woman, my own thoughts and beliefs about what is best for me is decided on how white, straight men feel. They do not value my needs and are more concerned about controlling my body than anything else.” - Michigan woman
- “It is a state that doesn't believe in individual liberty or women's rights. Such states tend to be hostile to immigrants, corrupt, racist and have high rates of gun violence. I would avoid such a state if possible.” - Michigan man

A majority of respondents would not apply for a job in a state that passed a ban like S.B. 8.

Participants read the following description of the Texas ban:

Texas lawmakers recently passed a law that bans abortion after six weeks, which is before most women know they are pregnant. That means it'll be illegal for most people to get an abortion. This law also calls on people to report each other in order to enforce the law. People would get a reward for reporting anyone, like healthcare providers or friends, who help a person get an abortion.

After the description, respondents were asked whether they'd apply for a job in a state that passed a law like this Texas one.

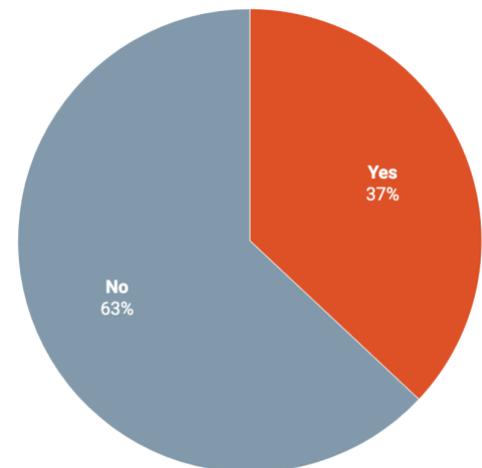
Sixty-three percent of top talent nationally and 53% of Ohio top talent say they would not apply for a job in a state that passed a ban similar to S.B. 8. In Ohio, 62% of women and 45% of men say they would not apply for a job in such a state.

Other demographic breakdowns nationally include:

- Women (73% would not apply for a job in state)
- Men (53%)
- Gen Z (68%)
- Millennials (66%)
- Black employees (66%)
- Latino/a employees (63%)
- AAPI employees (64%)
- Recent graduates (66%)

Would you apply for a job in a state that passed a law like this Texas one?

Total of n = 1,804 respondents nationally



About half of respondents say they'd consider moving out-of-state if their lawmakers passed an abortion ban like S.B. 8.

Nationally, about half of top talent (49%) says they would think about moving out of state if their state passed a law like SB 8. Close to half of Ohio women (45%) feels similarly as does one-third (36%) of men in the state (40% of all Ohio respondents).

Other demographic breakdowns nationally include:

- Women (56% would think of moving out of state)
- Men (42%)
- Gen Z (56%)
- Millennials (53%)
- Black employees (37%)
- Latino/a employees (46%)
- AAPI employees (47%)
- Recent graduates (52%)

Top talent wants reproductive health care, including abortion access, included in corporate gender equity efforts.

Roughly seven in ten respondents nationally (69%) say access to reproductive health care, including abortion, should be part of the issues companies address when it comes to gender issues in the workplace.

Political contributions to anti-abortion candidates and elected officials is much more likely to elicit negative rather than positive feelings toward companies.

We asked respondents how they would feel if they found out their company was making political contributions to candidates and elected officials who support abortion bans and restricting abortion access. By a margin of 50 points, top talent nationally say these contributions would make them feel less positively (64%) toward their company vs. more positively (14%). Among Ohio respondents, 56% would feel less positively v. 18% more positively.