



NARAL Pro-Choice Texas

Houston Candidate Questionnaire On Reproductive Rights



Ashton P. Woods

Candidate for City Council At-Large Position 5

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Legality of Abortion

I believe abortion is part of comprehensive reproductive health care and support the right to choose abortion as fundamental to each person's autonomy.

Agree

I support the enshrinement of the fundamental right to abortion in law and oppose legislation that makes abortion and other reproductive health services harder to access.

Agree

Policies That Affect Access to Abortion

Insurance coverage for abortion services, including government-provided health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.

Support

Laws that prevent local governments and jurisdictions from providing funding for abortion services to indigent residents

Oppose

State law that requires doctors to provide information unsupported by medical and scientific evidence, such as the claim included in the "Women's Right to Know" Act that asserts that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer

Oppose



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State law that that imposes a medically unnecessary 24-hour waiting period on abortion patients, necessitating at least two separate visits to the same provider

Oppose

Policies that require pregnant minors to obtain parental consent or seek a judicial bypass in order to receive an abortion

Oppose

Policies, including local clinic safety ordinances, that protect patients, doctors, and other health care professionals at reproductive health clinics from violence, harassment, threats, and intimidation

Support

Proposals ensuring that “crisis pregnancy centers” (CPCs, fake women’s health clinics, of which there are more than 10 in Houston) do not mislead or intimidate people facing unintended pregnancy by misrepresenting themselves as sources of unbiased health information, and local ordinances that limit false advertising and other deceptive practices of CPCs

Support

Non-coercive, comprehensive access to the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, for incarcerated people

Support

Local funding for organizations that provide logistical assistance, doula services, and other wrap-around support for people seeking abortion care

Support

Policies That Support Access to Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care and Support Healthy Communities

State law that prevents local government from partnering with abortion providers or their affiliates (such as, but not only, Planned Parenthood) for services like sexual health education, family planning initiatives and STI prevention



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Oppose

Proposals that allow certain individuals or corporations (such as HMOs, pharmacists, and health insurance companies) to refuse to provide specific reproductive health services, information, or referrals, including under claim of "religious liberty"

Oppose

Emergency contraception (EC) should be accessible to all people – including ER patients and people who seek services because of rape or sexual assault. (EC is an FDA-approved contraceptive, taken after sex, which greatly reduces the likelihood of pregnancy. EC is not abortion and cannot harm a pregnancy if one is already established.)

Agree

All Houston workers should have a living wage of at least \$15 per hour.

Agree

All employers, including the City of Houston, should provide paid family and medical leave so that people aren't forced to make a choice between earning an income and caring for themselves and their families.

Agree

Pregnant individuals should be able to work, be protected from discrimination, and be provided with any reasonable accommodations they need.

Agree

The City of Houston should protect its employees, public housing residents, and HHA voucher recipients from discrimination based on gender identity and reproductive decisions.

Agree

The City of Houston has a role to play in helping school districts provide age-appropriate and medically accurate sexual health education that is not limited to teaching only abstinence.

Agree

Undocumented people should be able to access reproductive health care without fear of being reported or shamed. The City of Houston should implement programs to help



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undocumented residents feel safe when seeking these services, such as municipal identification and cultural competency and “Know Your Rights” trainings for healthcare providers and clinic staff.

Agree

Municipal courts should abolish cash bail such that people do not face pre-trial incarceration — and, therefore, the risk of losing their homes, jobs, and ability to care for their families — for being too poor to post bond.

Agree

Getting to Know the Candidate and How They View Reproductive Freedom

Please describe your stance on access to reproductive health care, including family planning, contraception, and access to abortion.

My stance is simple, reproductive healthcare should be accessible to everyone. I am a cis/gay man and I believe that we should not be telling women how to run their bodies and I have a deep respect for personal autonomy. Access to planning, contraception and abortions is a right and not a privilege.

Where does it fall on your list of priorities?

Reproductive rights are embedded in all of my platform points, I believe that change and removing barriers to entry should be holistic. Workers' rights, access to healthcare and education about human sexual behavior are forms of direct support for repro rights.

Do you see a connection between reproductive rights and other issues, such as racial, economic, and migrant justice?

Yes, people of color tend to be the most vulnerable and the pushed to the fringes which means that basic quality of life is non-existent. Many Reproductive rights orgs supply basic medical services that range from HIV testing and treatment to cancer screenings of various types. In a time when a great deal of Houstonians lack access to healthcare in terms of prevention rely on these services.

How will that impact your service if elected to office? Do you intend to proactively seek out opportunities to champion action for reproductive rights, including by drafting and



sponsoring creative items to increase gender equity and access to reproductive health for all Houston residents?

I am running to do what I already do as an activist and I believe that when I'm elected, I will be able to use my platform to speak up and bring those most effected by repro rights to the table and to the forefront. As a member of the LGBT community, I believe that we need a non discrimination ordinance that protects every single right of all Houstonians, including the Trans community.

How do you feel about preemption of local government on progressive issues? Specifically, are you willing to champion, support, and vote for legislation that may ultimately be preempted if you feel it's the right thing to do, including on issues of abortion access? Will you, subsequent to passage of progressive legislation, work to stop potential preemption, including actively opposing state legislative overreach and providing resources to defend city laws in court?

During past legislative sessions I have represented Black Lives Matter Houston in testimony and have personally worked on bills that decriminalize, expand access for repro rights and I have also stood against bill as they have arisen that could harm vulnerable communities. As a city council member, I will continue to fight and do what I have always done, create new paths to equity.

Tell us about a time when you stood up for reproductive rights and gender equity. Have you ever been publicly outspoken about your values in supporting access to abortion? Have you ever had conversation with colleagues, coworkers or other community members, published an opinion piece in the paper, attended a public event in support of reproductive rights, etc?

I can recall many times, however this is a personal issue that I have first hand experiences with. I have had the honor of escorting friends and strangers to seek abortion services. While I have publically spoken up about abortion rights and access, we need more than talk... we need action. When it comes to gender equity I check my cis/male privilege often by speaking out and yeilding space to women,(cis/trans) femmes and Trans masculine people who are directly effected by lack of access. I have been loud, will be loud and yes I have and will do all of what is needed to educate and create paths to access.