

Shield Law Challenges

The interstate conflict over abortion and gender-affirming care has escalated as states and private actors have brought civil actions and criminal proceedings against health care providers for offering care across state lines. These legal actions may test [shield laws](#)—the protections for health care providers, patients, and those supporting reproductive and gender-affirming health care in states where that care is legal against the reach of states with civil, criminal, and professional consequences related to that care.

This resource collects and describes the legal actions in which shield laws have been or are likely to be used to protect people providing, receiving, and supporting reproductive and gender-affirming health care. This resource includes:

- 2 state criminal proceedings
- 4 state civil actions or investigations
- 1 federal civil action

This resource was last updated in March 2026.

Texas v. Aid Access, et al.

Cause No. 26-CV-0349, Tex. Dist. Ct., Galveston County (filed Feb. 24, 2026)

Type of Challenge: State civil case

Summary: Texas [sued](#) California-based health care provider Dr. Remy Coeytaux, Netherlands-based abortion telemedicine organization Aid Access, and Aid Access's founder Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, claiming that all have advertised, prescribed, and mailed medication abortion to individuals in Texas in violation of Texas's abortion ban and prohibition on practice of medicine without a Texas license. Texas has requested an order temporarily and permanently enjoining all defendants from providing abortions and practicing without a state license in violation of Texas law. [California's shield law](#) offers protections against civil liability for providing abortion, including by telehealth.

Status: The case is pending in Texas state district court.

Texas v. Lynch, et al.

Cause No. 26DCCV0146, Tex. Dist. Ct., Jefferson County (filed Jan. 27, 2026)

Type of Challenge: State civil case

Summary: In January 2026, Texas [sued](#) Delaware-based health care provider Debra Lynch and her telemedicine practice and company Her Safe Harbor and Delaware Community Health, claiming Nurse Practitioner Lynch violated Texas's abortion ban and practiced medicine without a Texas

license by providing medication abortion to patients in Texas through telehealth. Texas has requested an order temporarily and permanently enjoining N.P. Lynch from providing abortions and practicing without a state license in violation of Texas law. [Delaware's shield law](#) offers protections against civil liability for providing or assisting in abortion.

Status: The case is pending in Texas state district court.

Louisiana v. Coeytaux

No. 0028F2026, La. Dist. Ct., St. Tammany (filed Jan. 1, 2026)

Type of Challenge: State criminal proceedings

Summary: In January 2026, a Louisiana state grand jury [indicted](#) a California-based health care provider, Dr. Remy Coeytaux, on criminal charges related to providing medication abortion to a patient in Louisiana in violation of Louisiana's abortion ban. Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry [stated](#) he would sign an order requesting Dr. Coeytaux's extradition.

Status: California Governor Gavin Newsom [denied](#) the extradition request, consistent with the Governor's prior commitment through a [California shield law](#), issued by executive order, not to surrender any person charged with a criminal violation of another state's law involving provision, receipt, or assistance with reproductive health care.

Rodriguez v. Coeytaux

Case No. 25-cv-00225, U.S. Dist. Ct. S.D. Tex. (filed July 20, 2025, amended Feb. 1, 2026)

Type of Challenge: Federal civil case

Summary: A Texas man, represented by anti-abortion lawyer Jonathan Mitchell, brought a [federal case](#) against a California-based health care provider Dr. Remy Coeytaux, alleging Dr. Coeytaux provided medication abortion through telehealth to the man's ex-partner in Texas in violation of Texas's abortion ban, Texas's wrongful death law, and the federal Comstock Act—an 1873 law enacted to curb “obscenity” by restricting the mailing of products and information “intended for producing abortion.” In addition to these claims, the lawsuit directly challenges a [California shield law](#) that allows people to bring a lawsuit in California against someone who engages in “abusive litigation”—a legal action to punish to someone for health care activity protected in California.

Status: This case is pending in federal district court in Texas.

Louisiana v. Carpenter

No. 250187, La. Dist. Ct., West Baton Rouge (filed Jan. 31, 2025)

Type of Challenge: State criminal proceedings

Summary: In January 2025, a Louisiana state grand jury [indicted](#) a New York-based health care provider, Dr. Maggie Carpenter, on criminal charges related to providing medication abortion to a patient in Louisiana in violation of Louisiana’s abortion ban. Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry signed [an order](#) requesting Dr. Carpenter’s extradition.

Status: On February 13, 2025, New York Governor Kathy Hochul [rejected](#) Louisiana’s extradition request, consistent with [New York’s shield law](#), which prohibits the governor from recognizing demands for extradition based on the provision, receipt, assistance, or material support for legally protected reproductive health activity.

Texas v. Carpenter

Cause No. 471-08943-2024, Tex. Dist. Ct., Collin County (filed Dec. 12, 2024)

Type of Challenge: State civil case

Summary: On December 12, 2024, Texas filed [a lawsuit](#) in Texas state court against a New York-based health care provider, Dr. Maggie Carpenter, claiming Dr. Carpenter violated Texas law by providing abortion care through telehealth to a patient in Texas. Because Dr. Carpenter did not respond to the complaint, the Texas court issued a [default judgment](#) on February 13, 2025, enjoining Dr. Carpenter from prescribing medication abortion to patients in Texas and imposing \$100,000 in penalties. When Texas tried to enforce the default judgment in New York in March 2025, the county clerk rejected the request, citing [New York’s shield law](#) prohibiting state and local government employees from using time, resources, equipment, or personnel in furtherance of an investigation or proceeding that seeks to impose liability on a person for legally protected health activity. In July 2025, Texas filed a petition in New York state court to compel the clerk to enforce the Texas court’s default judgment (*Texas v. Bruck*, Case No. EF2025-2536, N.Y. Sup. Ct.).

Status: On October 31, 2025, the [New York state court upheld](#) the clerk’s refusal to process Texas’s request to enforce its state court’s default judgment based on New York’s shield law, reasoning that New York’s shield law “was intended to provide a broad, prophylactic package of laws to protect New York medical providers offering reproductive healthcare telehealth services to out-of-state patients,” and the alleged provision of care was “the precise type of conduct” the shield law was designed to protect.

Seattle Children’s Hospital v. Office of the Attorney General of the State of Texas,

Cause No. D-1-GN-23-008855, Tex. Dist. Ct., Travis County (filed Dec. 7, 2023)

Type of Challenge: State civil investigation

Summary: In November 2023, Texas issued a civil investigative demand to Seattle Children’s Hospital requesting information related to the Hospital’s provision of gender-affirming care to Texas residents. On December 7, 2023, the Hospital filed a [special appearance and petition](#) in Texas state court challenging the Texas AG’s request based on jurisdictional issues, HIPAA, and a [Washington shield law](#) protection prohibiting Washington-based entities that provide electronic communication services from responding to requests that relate to an investigation asserting liability for protected health care.

Status: In April 2024, the [matter settled](#) by Texas withdrawing its request and the Hospital agreeing not to do business in Texas.