

## ***TRAP Laws and Their Impact on Women's Health***

Lillian Ringel\*

Keywords: TRAP, bioethics, ethics, abortion

### INTRODUCTION

Eyal Press, in the February 3, 2014 edition of the *New Yorker*, wrote an expose on Steven Brigham, a physician and graduate of Columbia University Medical School, whose abortion clinics have been implicated in a string of patient injuries – both physical and psychological – and botched abortions.

Brigham has been and is now the subject of licensure status inquiries and/or revocation proceedings in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

Brigham's stated motive for opening up shoddy clinics was to provide an option for women (especially for minorities and the indigent) who would otherwise have had little to no resources to exercise their right to terminate.

### ANALYSIS

Women are subjected to an inconsistent patchwork of state laws and constant limitation by state legislatures creating TRAP (or, Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) laws. The diminishing availability of abortion in the United States has not only made safe, legal abortion ever more difficult to access (especially for those with limited or no means), but has left a dangerous, gaping hole where Brigham – well-meaning or not – was able to establish his presence.

TRAP laws limit abortions by unnecessarily regulating anything from where (e.g. the kind of building in which) abortions can be performed, to regulating the people who work in the office themselves (e.g. personnel regulations), to charging astronomically high fees to register a clinic within a state. These laws do little to veil their true purpose of making it nearly impossible for an abortion provider to do his or her job.

### CONCLUSION

The vacuum that patchwork state laws and TRAP laws create makes room for ill-qualified providers by

\* Lillian Ringel, MS Bioethics-

discouraging other ob/gyns from incorporating abortion into their practices.

Whatever Brigham's motives, his clinics have harmed both women and families, and fuel anti-choice support for TRAP laws. Back alley clinics add fuel to the fire for those who argue that government should enter women's bodies.

## REFERENCES

Eyal Press, A Botched Operation, The New Yorker (February 3, 2014), available at [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/02/03/140203fa\\_fact\\_press](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/02/03/140203fa_fact_press)