

Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Federal Courts, Oversight,
Agency Action, & Federal Rights
Hearing on “Crossing the Line: Abortion Bans and
Interstate Travel for Care After Dobbs”
May 12, 2024
Questions for the Record
Senator Amy Klobuchar

For Ms. Lauren Miller, Plaintiff in *Zurawski v. State of Texas*

You spoke very powerfully about what it was like to go through the heartbreaking and traumatizing reality of needing to end your pregnancy and seek needed health care far away. As your case demonstrates, the *Dobbs* decision has had a real impact on women’s lives.

- As a patient, what barriers and challenges do women who are facing restrictions to care - who might need to travel or consider options - face?

Response from Lauren Miller:

There are a number of barriers to travel: costs, time, knowing where to go, childcare for existing children. One that is shocking these days is a simple question: “how sick are you?” The physical ability to travel is the first barrier that we must face.

Less than 72 hours after I left the emergency room, I was on a plane to Colorado. I was lucky: I know women who were told that they couldn’t be more than 15 minutes from a hospital.

If I had not been able to keep the vomiting at bay as I went through the TSA line and boarded the plane, I’m not sure if I would have made it out of state. I remember focusing on the terrazzo floor of Dallas Love Field, hunching my shoulders forward and rolling my hips inward to try to hide the distinct swollen belly of a second-trimester twin pregnancy.

I darted up the escalator and to the bathroom and threw up as soon as I got through security.

If adrenaline hadn’t carried me through the airport, my fate would have been to sit in a hospital bed for months until I lost both of my twins. This course of action is not a hypothetical: it was the plan that I had discussed with the doctors in the Dallas ER when they advised me to have a bag packed because the next time that I returned to the hospital, it would be for the duration of the pregnancy. I would have to wait to lose both of my sons, including our healthy twin, our one-year-old Henry.

Henry would not be here if I hadn’t boarded that plane.

The flight from Dallas to Denver is exactly two hours. I knew how many times I could throw up in two hours. It was a short enough duration that I could make it to a hospital on the other end. I could get to Colorado and access health care.

Two hours driving wouldn't even see me to the Texas Panhandle. The area where, despite statements from some of the subcommittee members that nobody is threatening out-of-state travel to access abortion care, there are extremists pushing for bans on using roads through the area to travel out of state for an abortion. They have put up large "Stop Abortion Trafficking" signs in Amarillo and despite a 4-1 Amarillo City Council vote to reject a travel ban ordinance, they have managed to ram this travel ban onto the ballot.

Travel is very much at risk in Texas. If I had been well enough to drive, I still wouldn't have been safe. I would only have gone into an area where access to care is harder to find.

Over six hours to the New Mexico border. Eight hours to Colorado. I was too sick to make it. The second emergency room trip occurred after less than six hours of unrelenting vomiting. It was gritty when I gagged out bile – the only thing left in my stomach. Bits of my esophagus were coming up from the strain of constant retching.

Travel costs, time, knowledge, childcare. If you have enough money and your job is flexible, you can buy your way out of those challenges. Most Texans do not have that luxury. Most Americans do not have that luxury.

But none of it matters because you can't buy health.

The Texas Supreme Court, Texas legislature, and Texas Medical Board have all declined to offer any clarity as to how dead we have to be before accessing abortion care. So instead, women like me, who simply weren't dead enough to satisfy their cruelty, must drag ourselves out of state to preserve our lives, health, and in my case, the life of my viable son.