

## Open Letter to the Executive Committee of the American Economic Association

The annual meetings of the ASSA provide a uniquely important opportunity for all members of the economics profession “[to network and celebrate new achievements in economic research.](#)” Attending the meetings is a rite of passage for graduating PhD students, and a necessary step in the process of obtaining an academic job in an economics department in the United States. The ASSAs also provide an important avenue for presenting and learning about new research, maintaining existing social networks and building new ones, and building technical skills. Given their importance to the profession, it is imperative that the Annual Meetings remain inclusive of all economists.

The AEA plans to hold the 2023 ASSA meetings in New Orleans. Louisiana’s ban on abortion, which came into effect when the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Dodd v. Jackson* overturned *Roe v. Wade*, makes it illegal to obtain an abortion in Louisiana and criminalizes healthcare providers who perform abortions. Though the law includes narrow exceptions for the health of the mother, [these come with onerous restrictions that will limit women’s ability to access life-saving care in the event of pregnancy complications.](#) These restrictions on healthcare place an undue, differential burden on young women in the economics profession, who are forced to balance the risk of needing medical care unavailable in Louisiana with their professional obligation to attend the Annual Meetings.

At present, the AEA is also planning to hold the 2024 Annual Meetings in Texas, [a state that has passed an equally restrictive abortion ban that will limit pregnant women’s access to necessary medical care in the event of pregnancy complications.](#) While there are many factors that influence the selection of a conference location, and the cost of rescheduling a major event on short notice is substantial, the welfare and safety of all attendees should be paramount. Holding the ASSAs in states that have limited women’s access to pregnancy-related medical care places an unfair and disproportionate burden on young female economists.

The AEA bylaws state that our organization “will take no partisan attitude, nor will it commit its members to any position on practical economic questions.” However, the health and human rights of pregnant AEA members transcend partisanship. Economists who are pregnant or might become pregnant have an equal right to participate in our Annual Meetings without facing disproportionate health risks.

To protect the health and wellbeing of all AEA members, I encourage the Executive Committee to relocate the 2023 and 2024 meetings, and to commit to holding future meetings in states where women’s rights to necessary pregnancy care are protected.

As an individual, I can only encourage the AEA to take the health and human rights of pregnant economists into account when scheduling the Annual Meetings. However, I will not attend the 2023

Annual Meetings if they are held in New Orleans while the current restrictive abortion ban is in place; nor will I attend future meetings held in states that ban abortion without broad exceptions for the health and welfare of the mother.

Signed:

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