



THE LEGALITY OF ABORTION: US VS UK

Abortion is more than a divisive political issue; it is a public health issue, a legal issue, and a gender-based violence issue. This infographic represents the first installment of a three-part analysis breaking down US/UK abortion legislation. Here, we cover the basics of abortion history and its current legislation.



Abortion is **legalized** under federal law, which applies to the entire country.



1965: GRISWOLD v. CONNECTICUT

Griswold v. CT ruled that the regulation of contraception violated a person's "right to privacy." Although not explicitly stated, the right to privacy is inherent in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This ruling paved the way for Roe v. Wade.

Before 1973, abortion was illegal in ALL cases in 30 states and legal in circumstances of rape, incest, or danger to a pregnant person's life in 16 states.

1973: ROE v. WADE

As a result of the Supreme court decision in Roe v. Wade, abortion was legalized. This ruling declared that the right to privacy was "broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."



Abortion is still legally classified as a **criminal act**.



1861: OFFENSES AGAINST THE PERSON ACT

Sections 58 and 59 stated that it is a crime both for a pregnant person to "procure her own miscarriage" and for another person to help them to do so (ie. a doctor or a nurse practitioner).

Abortion currently requires the authorization of two separate doctors.

1967: THE ABORTION ACT

The Abortion Act did not decriminalize abortion but provided a legal "exception" that allows abortions within the first 24 weeks (up to the end of the second trimester) if two doctors are both of the opinion that there are "lawful grounds for the procedure."



SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When it comes to abortion access in the modern world, the US appears more progressive than the UK. But evidence indicates that abortion is far more accessible overall in the UK, according to factors such as cost, geography, and efficiency. How do we account for such a discrepancy? We'll explore that next.

WANT TO
LEARN MORE?

Read our full blog post, "Understanding the Legality of Abortion: A US/UK Comparative Framework," at www.empowerlab.org/our-blog. Citations included.

