Sex-selective abortion bans are a racist, anti-abortion ruse that presents a false choice between gender equity and abortion rights. These bans make it illegal for a doctor to perform an abortion when they know or suspect that a patient is having an abortion based on the sex of the fetus.

In 2013 and 2014, sex-selective abortion bans were the second-most introduced abortion restriction in the US. Twelve of the fifteen states with the largest AAPI populations and ten of the fifteen states with the highest AAPI growth rates have proposed the ban.

In 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit declared Indiana’s sex-selective abortion ban unconstitutional.

Threatening providers with criminal and civil penalties could decrease the availability of services for communities that are already underserved by intimidating doctors out of performing abortions. Furthermore, they open the door to various other pre-viability abortion bans (e.g., six-week or “heartbeat” abortion ban, or other bans based on race selection or Down Syndrome) that are unconstitutional and only restrict women’s rights and access to abortion.

Supporters of these bans are concerned about women’s rights and gender equity. If promoting gender equality is a genuine priority, legislators should put their effort towards issues like pay equity, improving maternity leave policies, and stopping sexual harassment in the workplace.