



## Banking on Abortion: Citigroup Announces it Will Cover Travel Expenses for Abortions in Pro-life States

Due to state laws in several states banning abortions either after a heartbeat is detected or after a certain number of weeks of pregnancy, Citigroup has taken the step of covering travel expenses for employees who go out of state for abortions. The bank announced Tuesday that the new policy is “in response to changes in reproductive healthcare laws in certain states in the US.”

Citigroup — the third-largest banking institution in the United States — made its announcement in a public filing ahead of its annual shareholders meeting in April. And while the filing does not specifically mention abortion, it states that the policy of covering travel expenses was put in place to “facilitate access to adequate resources.”



AP Images

And while Citigroup may have conspicuously left any direct mention of abortion out of the filing, the use of euphemism is hard to miss. By stating that the bank is covering employees travel expenses to “facilitate access to adequate resources” “in response to changes in reproductive healthcare laws in certain states in the US,” Citigroup could not have been more clear if the filing has said, “We want to be known as the abortion bank.”

As the *New York Post* [reported](#):

Citi will cover transportation and lodging for employees who need to leave states such as Texas for abortions, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Citigroup — which is considered a systemically important bank by the Financial Stability Board and is commonly cited as being “too big to fail” — was part of the U.S. government’s 2008 bailout of financial institutions. Since then, Citigroup has been no stranger to controversy. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Citigroup was — as of 2008, when the U.S. government bailed it out — the 16th-largest political campaign contributor in the United States. In 2014, [of the 57 Democrats supporting the 2015 spending bill, 34 had received campaign cash from Citigroup’s PAC](#) at some point since 2010. The line between Citigroup and government is blurry indeed. And the line between Citigroup and the establishment is so faint it can scarcely be seen at times. The government bailed Citigroup out and Citigroup began buying the government off. Nice arrangement, if you can get it.

And this new report of Citigroup paying for employees’ travel to obtain an abortion is not Citigroup’s first foray into liberal policies. In 2018 — following high-profile shootings — [Citigroup placed restrictions on its clients who sell firearms](#).

As the possible end of *Roe v. Wade* approaches with the Supreme Court’s ruling on the abortion laws in



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Texas and Mississippi expected in June, [several Republican-led states have enacted laws to protect the lives of unborn children](#). Citigroup's new policy — buried in the most recent filing — is the bank's response to those laws. As Bloomberg [reported](#):

Buried in a filing released Tuesday night, the bank disclosed it will now cover travel costs for employees seeking an abortion after several states including Texas implemented or proposed a near-total ban on the procedure. The New York-based bank will pay expenses, such as airfare and lodging, that employees may incur if forced to leave a state for an abortion.

Of course, the idea that anyone could be “forced to leave a state for an abortion” is ridiculous. No one is ever “forced” to *get* an abortion, much less leave a state to do so. Abortion is — by its very nature — an elective surgery designed to kill an unborn human person.

The backlash from Texas Republicans who see the new Citigroup policy for what it was immediate.

Matt Rinaldi — who serves as chairman of the Republican Party of Texas — said, “Citigroup’s decision to finance the murder of unborn children with a heartbeat is appalling, but not surprising, considering its past adoption of far-left causes.” He added a call for Republicans to avoid entrusting their finances with Citibank and other companies that are hostile to them and their values.

And Texas land commissioner running for the Republican nomination for attorney general, George P. Bush (yes, of *those* Bushes) said, “The ‘travel benefits’ offered by Citigroup is nothing more than a PR stunt by a ‘woke’ company to support a culture of death,” adding, “Texas is a pro-life state, and if elected Attorney General, I will hold actors who attempt to find loopholes in our laws accountable.”

Bush’s warning that he will “hold actors who attempt to find loopholes in our laws accountable” may not be a hollow threat. The Texas law allows citizens to sue anyone who aids another in obtaining an abortion. And Bloomberg cited Columbia University law professor Carol Sanger as saying that the bank will be opening itself and its human resources employees up to “aiding and abetting” liability under the Texas law. She said the bank may be gambling it won’t get sued “because nobody has been sued yet” under the statute’s enabling provision.

While other financial institutions (and other major employers) in Texas are likely watching Citigroup’s policy closely to see how it pans out for them, most other large employers in Texas are sitting tight. In fact, as Bloomberg reported, most are staying mum:

Indeed, banks operating in Texas were mostly quiet on Citi’s move. JPMorgan Chase & Co. didn’t have an immediate comment. Bank of America Corp., Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley all didn’t respond to requests seeking comment. Some of the state’s biggest employers — American Airlines Group Inc., Southwest Airlines Co., Exxon Mobil Corp., Halliburton Co., AT&T Inc. and Toyota Motor Corp. — didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

One exception to that rule of silence is Wells Fargo. A spokesperson for the bank simply said, “We do not have a travel benefit for abortion services at this time,” indicating a desire to leave that door open for the future.

But some companies known for their liberal stances have taken the Citigroup approach on this and



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other “Culture War” issues. As Bloomberg reported:

Some CEOs have tried to openly navigate the culture wars as they strive to retain talent. Match Group Inc. CEO Shar Dubey, whose Dallas-based company owns some of the biggest dating apps, said last year she was creating a fund to help cover the costs for employees and dependents who need to seek care outside the state. Lyft Inc. and Uber Technologies Inc. pledged to pay legal fees for drivers sued under the Texas law.

Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff said in September the company would offer assistance to employees who wanted to leave Texas in response to the anti-abortion law. On March 12, dozens of companies including Apple Inc., Alphabet Inc.’s Google, Dow Inc. and Johnson & Johnson, took out an ad in the Dallas Morning News urging the state to scrap Abbott’s order on transgender kids.

As this unfolds, one thing is certain: The companies that are coming out in favor of these and other liberal policies and practices are unashamedly drawing a line in the sand and then boldly crossing it to declare their position. As this unfolds and the Supreme Court hands down a decision that is expected to return the abortion issue to the states, America is going to be segmented by Abortion States and Life States. It will be interesting to watch these “woke” companies try not to become broke companies if the residents of the Life States don’t want to work for them or do business with them.



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