

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PARDON

Laura Miner

Laura Miner, a courageous provider of reproductive health care services in California from 1934 to 1948, has been designated for executive clemency.

The State of California criminalized abortion at its founding in 1850, a punitive restriction that for more than a century forced people to seek unregulated and often medically risky abortions. Economically disadvantaged girls and women were at particular risk for financial exploitation, injury, and death in the illegal abortion market. Reputable health care practitioners who provided safe abortions risked losing their professional licenses, prosecution, and imprisonment.

Despite these risks, Ms. Miner dedicated herself to providing safe and accessible abortions to people in California. Ms. Miner was respected in the medical community as a highly skilled and proficient practitioner. She also sought to make her health care accessible by serving patients on a sliding scale.

Ms. Miner experienced firsthand many of the harmful intergenerational consequences of reproductive health restrictions. As a young child, Ms. Miner witnessed her mother nearly die from a botched illegal abortion. Her mother later died when Ms. Miner was nine years old, and Ms. Miner and her seven siblings experienced significant instability. Ms. Miner had four children, two of whom died in infancy from illness. She experienced persistent social and legal challenges to her own reproductive health and autonomy. For many years, Ms. Miner raised her children as a single mother. She drew on these experiences to serve others who faced similar challenges.

In 1948, Ms. Miner was arrested for providing abortion services to clients. On or about April 27, 1949, in the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego, 50-year-old Ms. Miner was convicted of the felony crimes of abortion and conspiracy to commit abortion. The court sentenced her to four years in prison for each charge, to run concurrently. Ms. Miner served one year and seven months in prison and two years and three months on parole. While in prison, Ms. Miner wrote, "I can still hold my head up, and I respect myself because my conscience is clear. I have helped humanity – someday it will be legal for a doctor to help a woman who will then have a right to decide for herself how many children she shall have, and when." Ms. Miner died in 1976.

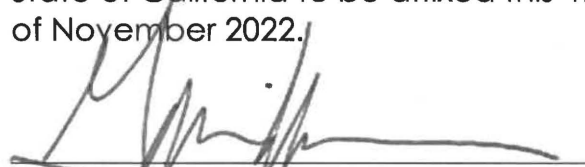
California now protects and regulates safe reproductive health care for all and continues to enact laws and policies that make reproductive health care services more affordable and accessible. Ms. Miner was criminalized for her work before California recognized and supported reproductive freedom.

With this act of clemency, I acknowledge the inherent injustice of Ms. Miner's conviction, and honor her important contributions to the people of California.

By the laws of this state it is proper that I, as Governor of the State of California, give testimony that Ms. Miner merits this posthumous pardon.

THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby grant to Ms. Miner a full and unconditional posthumous pardon for the above case.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 4th day of November 2022.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH.D.
Secretary of State