minors aged 17 years and 10 months at conception, and close to 100% of minors aged 17 years and 11 months, were 18 by the time of the procedure. The proportion of abortions that were obtained at age 18 increased for some age-groups between 1998–1999 and 2000–2003 (Figure 2). Minors aged 17 years and eight months at conception experienced a six-point increase between the prelaw and postlaw periods (p<.01).* An even greater increase occurred among minors aged 17 years and nine months at conception—13 points (p<.01). The likelihood of delaying the abortion until age 18 did not change significantly for those in the two youngest or the two oldest groups. This is not surprising: For the younger age-groups, the wait was much less feasible, as it would have entailed having the abortion late in the second trimester, or possibly in the third trimester. The opposite is true for the older age-groups. The great majority of these teenagers were 18 at the time of abortion even in the prelaw years, and were in essence not subject to the law.

During 1998–1999, the proportion of abortions that were obtained at or after age 17 among minors who conceived between age 16 years and six months and age 16 years and 11 months followed a similar pattern to that observed among the older teenagers (Figure 3). This proportion rises gradually from 1% of the youngest group to 100% of the oldest. We find no evidence of an increase between the prelaw and postlaw periods in these minors’ likelihood of obtaining the abortion at age 17 (Figure 4). In fact, the proportion of 16-year-olds who have abortions at age 17 mostly declined after implementation of Texas’s law. For those aged 16 years and six months and 16 years and 10 months at conception, the declines were statistically significant (p<.05 for both); for those aged 16 years and eight months, the decline was marginally significant (p<.10). Minors aged 16 years and nine months experienced a slight increase in the likelihood of having an abortion at age 17; however, the increase was not significant at conventional levels (p=.35).

The likelihood of delay of abortion until age 18 among minors aged 17 years and 8–9 months increased each year between 2000 and 2003 (Figure 5). The change in the proportion who have abortions at age 18 was an estimated eight percentage points between 1998–1999 and 2000, and it rose to 15 points between 1998–1999 and 2002 (p<.01 for both changes). Although the change between 1998–1999 and 2003 (six percentage points) was the smallest, it was not statistically different from the change in 2000 or 2001 (p=.50 and p=.20, respectively). Thus, we have evidence of an average increase of almost 10 percentage points between 1998–1999 and each postlaw year, but no indication of a change in this behavior over time.

Minors who conceive at age 17 years and 8–9 months have to wait up to four months if they want to schedule an abortion after their 18th birthday. Thus, most of these abortions occur well into the second trimester. Our data reveal that all minors aged 17 years and eight months who delayed until age 18 had their abortion after the 12th week of gestation. The mean gestational age at the time of abortion was 18.2 weeks for this group, as opposed to 8.4 weeks among teenagers of the same age who had their abortion before they turned 18. Among teenagers aged 17 years and nine months at the time of conception who delayed, 50% were in the second trimester by the time the abortion was performed. We calculate that the mean gestational age was 13.3 weeks for them, compared with 7.5 weeks among those in the same age-group who did not delay.

*All reported p values are from a two-tailed test, unless otherwise noted.