

When Women Lose the Right to Choose

Reeling in the aftermath of an overturned, landmark decision

[Quintessa](#)

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Women's Rights



A pregnant woman pictured above | [Photo Courtesy of Getty Images](#)

"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and mystery of human life." — Anthony Kennedy

o·ver·turn

1. abolish, invalidate, or reverse (a previous system, decision, situation, etc).

On May 2, 2022, [a leaked draft was obtained by Politico](#) in which Justice Samuel Alito indicated that the Supreme Court was [prepared to overturn Roe and Casey](#) in a pending final decision to be held by June 2022. The next day, Chief Justice Roberts [confirmed the credibility of the draft](#) but stated that the document does not represent a final decision by the Court.

Roe v. Wade is a 1973 [US Supreme Court landmark decision](#) that protected a pregnant woman's liberty without excessive government restriction. The [landmark decision involved Norma McCorvey](#), known under the legal pseudonym Jane Roe, who became pregnant in Texas in 1969, where abortion was only legal in the event it was necessary to save the mother's life. Roe and her attorneys filed a lawsuit against the local district attorney, Henry Wade, citing the current abortion laws as 'unconstitutional.'

This right of privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, we feel it is...broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether to terminate her pregnancy. — [Roe, 410 U.S. at 153](#)

On January 22nd, 1973, the Supreme Court [rendered a 7–2 decision in favor](#) of Roe, in which the right to privacy protects a pregnant woman's right to choose whether or not

to have an abortion; — [with the stipulation](#) that during the first trimester, governments could not prohibit abortions; — the second trimester, governments could provide reasonable health alternatives and regulations; — and the third trimester, abortions could be prohibited entirely, except in the event it was necessary to ensure the health or life of the mother.

Though the Supreme Court's ruling balanced the government's interest to protect women's rights, [the decision was widely criticized](#) and accused of being the result of the Courts going beyond the law based on their own personal beliefs.

Nearly 50 years after the historic landmark decision that helped inform and shape the right to choose, The [Supreme Court in a 5–4 decision](#), viciously overturned *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood*, ending the constitutional right to abortion and shaking women's rights to the core.

As of now, at least 11 states such as Texas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Louisiana [now ban or severely limit abortion](#). 11 others such as Mississippi, Utah, and Tennessee [have trigger laws](#) — not yet in effect — to do the same. Overall, as a result of overturning the historic landmark decision, [at least 26 states](#) will likely ban abortion.

“For nearly 50 years, women have had the right to make our own decisions about our bodies. Today, that right was stolen from us.” — [First Lady Jill Biden](#)

"I am heartbroken today...for the people around this country who just lost the fundamental right to make informed decisions about their own bodies." — [Former First Lady Michelle Obama](#)

"Today, I stand in solidarity with the 36 MILLION women being stripped of their right to decide what is best for themselves. We WILL keep fighting!" — [House Financial Chairwoman Maxine Waters](#)

While the decision to fully ban abortions is currently left to the states, some have already shown how The Supreme Court's decision has influenced their attempts to ban or limit abortion as soon as possible. The overturning represents the ill-conceived notions of supposed conservatives. The same notions overturn the right to choose but somehow make [owning a gun easier](#) and [Miranda Rights](#) no longer a requirement.

A logic that says: While [we don't believe outlawing guns](#) or reading rights will stop violence, we do believe outlawing abortions will stop abortion.

In just one week, the Supreme Court has made it possible to carry a concealed gun in public without a permit. However, if you get an abortion you could be arrested or jailed, — without being read your Miranda Rights.

And I'll never be conservative enough to understand that logic.

“Millions of women in America will go to bed tonight without access to the health care and reproductive health care their mothers and grandmothers had for 50 years. A constitutional right has been taken from the people of America.” — [Vice President Kamala Harris](#)

Over 36 million women have been set back 50 years by the falsehoods that this decision upholds pro-life and protects the unborn. A senseless supposed belief system to the many women now left endangered; — by a decision to which its rulers will likely be left unscathed.

More personally for me, the decision represents a death sentence for Black women; — as if [significant health and maternal mortality rates](#) aren't disparaging enough, the ban could potentially [raise Black maternal deaths to 33 percent](#), in the same America where Black women already face some of the worst pregnancy-related outcomes.

As protests over the overturning erupted throughout the world, [20 Black congresswomen in a letter](#) to President Biden, urged a declaration of a national emergency. Lawmakers including Rep. Ayanna Pressley, Cori Bush, Nikema Williams, and Marilyn Strickland [urged Biden](#) to “use any and all executive authorities to address the public health crisis our nation will face if Roe v. Wade is dismantled.”

All women undoubtedly deserve fundamental rights. Overturning 50 years of federal abortion rights have turned

this country's history much darker and has rippled women's rights across America. More urgently, what should be overturned, is the idea that politicians are allowed to dictate a woman's health decisions regarding her own body.

Abortion should be allowed to remain a safe harbor for those seeking its care. Because not only does the overturning reduce women's rights, but also the access to the appropriate health care. And denying women the right to safe abortions makes the rulers' case for pro-life and protecting the unborn more senseless than ever.

The reverse of a fundamental and constitutional right is a definite cause for a [health and national emergency](#). A cause to codify Roe v. Wade, expand the courts, and to lawfully protect our rights more deeply.

The Supreme Court's decision is a reminder that progress for gender equality is fragile. However, it has been also made painfully clear that we are to never take women's rights for granted. Because when women lose the right to choose, it is not the time to stand down, but to stand up.

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