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DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Roe v. Wade: In Memoriam

BY AMARA KWIATKOWSKI ON MAY 24, 2022 • (LEAVE A COMMENT)



Jane Roe (Norma McCorvey) and her lawyer, photographed by Lorie Shaull

Overturning *Roe v. Wade* will not end all abortions, just legal ones.

Eliminating abortion access does not save lives, it puts more at risk. When legal avenues are removed, people have no choice but to turn to unsafe practices to end a pregnancy. According to ScienceDirect

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/illegal-abortion>), “Among the 19 million women receiving unsafe abortions each year, approximately 68,000 women die following the procedure.” Unsafe abortion options become the only

avenue for people to terminate a pregnancy, and **in areas with tighter laws** (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>), more people die. Eliminating abortion is not pro-life, it is pro-fetus. **1 in 4 women** (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/illegal-abortion>) by age 45 will have had an abortion. It is up to the Supreme Court to decide how many more people will be at risk of unsafe procedural conditions.

Overturing *Roe v. Wade* will not just end legal abortions, it will unfairly discriminate against low-income people and people of color.

Abortion is more than an issue of reproductive freedom, it's a class and race issue as well. After *Roe* is overturned, Texans will have to drive an average of **525 miles** (<https://www.texastribune.org/2022/05/02/texas-abortion-law-roe-wade/>) each way to receive an abortion. This means that not only will unsafe abortions become more prevalent, but they will be used predominantly by people who cannot afford to travel a thousand miles to obtain an abortion out of state. Moreover, anti-abortion movements are inherently racist, per the **American Civil Liberties Union** (<https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/the-racist-history-of-abortion-and-midwifery-bans>); “for Black women, the maternal death rate is nearly four times that of white women, and 10 to 17 times worse in some states.” If Black women are forced to carry to term, they are at a significant disadvantage once in labor; this means that in areas with tighter abortion restrictions, Black women may suffer from even more unsafe environments. The ACLU continues, “Just like slavery, anti-abortion efforts are rooted in white supremacy, the exploitation of Black women, and placing women’s bodies in service to men. Just like slavery, maximizing wealth and consolidating power motivated the anti-abortion enterprise.” The history of abortion is deeply entwined with the history of misogynoir, the intersection of racism and misogyny.

Overturing *Roe v. Wade* will not just unfairly discriminate against BIPOC women, it will also jeopardize every American’s right to privacy.

It doesn’t matter how we feel about the act of performing an abortion. After all, *Roe v. Wade* isn’t even strictly about abortion — it is about our collective right to privacy under the law. Birth control and same-sex marriage **are just two things** (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/05/03/abortion-roe-leaked-opinion-consequences-katyal/>) that may now be at risk. *Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, both landmark cases in their respective issues, could potentially have the same fate as *Roe*. Both cases were based on the right to privacy, just like *Roe* — an unenumerated guarantee that some current Supreme Court justices believe has no constitutional standing. How can we justify eradicating access to both birth control *and* abortion? In what world would gay marriage be in jeopardy *again* in 2022? If America overturned *Roe*, it would be “**an outlier in the West** (<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/03/world/us-abortion-law-global-comparison-sctus-intl-cmd/index.html>).” We cannot lead the world while lagging on civil protections.

If the Supreme Court chooses to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, states like Texas will act quickly to strip Americans of their rights. It is in all of our best interests to protect our right to privacy:

For the thousands of people who risk their lives to end a pregnancy every year.

For the people who deserve to live their lives (<https://people.com/health/celebrity-abortion-stories-busy-philipps-jameela-jamil/>) without being bound by their decisions.

For the Americans who want to get married, regardless of their gender.

For the people already struggling with the effects of income inequality in our country.

And for our mothers who fought in the 1970s to protect the same rights their children are at risk of losing now.

I'll leave you with a quote:

“If every woman who’s had an abortion took tomorrow off in protest, America would grind to a halt. And that would be symbolic because women grind to a halt if they are not in control of their fertility.” — Caitlin Moran



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