

# Fred Risser and Lisa Subeck: With uncertain future for Roe v. Wade, Wisconsin women's health in jeopardy

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Donald Trump has nominated Brett Kavanaugh to fill Justice Anthony Kennedy's US Supreme Court seat. Kavanaugh's conservative leanings, reflected in his past writings and judicial record, portend an ominous future for Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court ruling issued in 1973 that determined that women have a constitutional right to an abortion. The possibility of Roe v. Wade being overturned poses a significant threat to women's access to comprehensive healthcare.

Make no mistake, should Roe v. Wade be overturned, women will continue to have abortions — overturning the ruling will only serve to make abortions unsafe and potentially deadly for many women. We know that when women cannot access abortion legally, they resort to dangerous back alley or self-induced procedures that put their health and lives in danger.

Since statehood, Wisconsin statutes have treated abortion as a crime. Our state law that criminalizes abortion has remained on the books even 45 years after the Supreme Court rendered that law invalid. If Roe v. Wade is overturned however, Wisconsin's law would once again take effect, immediately making abortion a crime in our state.

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Whether or not to have an abortion is a deeply personal decision that should be made by a woman in consultation with her physician and her trusted advisors. We cannot know all of the personal and medical circumstances that a woman faces when considering abortion. Every situation is unique, and that is why we need to trust women to make their own reproductive health care decisions without interference from politicians. With the future of *Roe v. Wade* in jeopardy, the time to repeal Wisconsin's law that criminalizes abortion is now.

We have introduced legislation to repeal Wisconsin's criminal abortion statute in each of the last two sessions, but the Republican majority has refused to even hold a hearing on our bills. It is more critical now than ever before that we act to repeal our abortion ban, as women's health and lives hang in the balance. We will continue to fight attacks on women's access to healthcare, and we will once again introduce legislation to repeal the State's criminal abortion statute when our next legislative session begins.

— *Risser, D-Madison, represents the 26th Senate District; and Subeck, D-Madison, represents the 78th Assembly District.*