

# **Gov. Evers: Leads coalition of 17 governors in calling for immediate action to protect reproductive rights**

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today led a coalition of 17 governors in calling for the U.S. Congress to take immediate action to protect reproductive rights and access to abortion. In a [joint letter](#) to congressional leaders, the governors called for Congress to work quickly to pass legislation to codify the rights and protections prescribed in *Roe v. Wade*. The letter comes as a draft U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* revealed yesterday that the Supreme Court is poised to overturn *Roe*, a ruling that established a constitutional right Wisconsinites and Americans have recognized and depended upon for nearly 50 years.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in December 2021 regarding a Mississippi law prohibiting abortions after 15 weeks without exceptions for rape or incest, in direct conflict with the court's previous rulings in *Roe*, among other reproductive health-related decisions. While the Supreme Court has not issued a final decision and abortion remains legal in the United States, a Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs* that reflects the draft opinion revealed yesterday could have severe consequences for all Wisconsinites—including Wisconsin women and their families. Wisconsin remains one of several states with existing criminal statutes enacted pre-*Roe* that prohibit nearly all abortion, which could go back into effect if *Roe* is overturned. Earlier this year, almost 49 years to the day since the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Roe*, Gov. Evers [joined](#) Attorney General Josh Kaul and advocates from across Wisconsin in calling on the Wisconsin State Legislature to urgently repeal Wisconsin's existing criminal abortion ban. The Legislature adjourned for the regular session in March having taken no action.

"Reproductive healthcare decisions are deeply personal and should be made by patients in consultation with their healthcare providers, not by politicians," the governors wrote to congressional leaders. "Despite the widespread support for reproductive freedom, in many states across the nation, a U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs* that reflects the draft opinion would immediately limit access to reproductive healthcare and, in some states, could even criminalize abortion, ending constitutional rights that have been recognized for nearly 50 years. The governors are calling for immediate passage of the [Women's Health Protection Act](#), which would protect access to abortion across the country, and to take any additional or necessary steps to codify protections under *Roe*. The Women's Health Protection Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives last September but has not yet passed the U.S. Senate.

"The consequences of overturning *Roe v. Wade* for millions across the nation cannot be overstated. Our collective responsibility to defend access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, has never been more important," the governors continued in the letter.

"Overturning *Roe* will turn back the clock on reproductive health, and Congress must immediately take action to ensure that our nation does not go backward and that the rights of all Americans to access reproductive healthcare and abortion continue to be protected.

According to polling by the Marquette University Law School, [61 percent of Wisconsinites](#) believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Additionally, [72 percent of Wisconsinites](#) are opposed to overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Gov. Evers has long advocated to protect access to reproductive healthcare. The governor has vetoed several bills passed by the Legislature, including [several this biennium](#), that would have restricted access to abortion, inserted politics into the personal and private conversations between patients and their healthcare providers, and made it harder for doctors to provide medically accurate information and treatment. Many of these bills also sought to limit healthcare options for people seeking basic, necessary care, such as pregnancy care, cancer screening and prevention, sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment, and wellness exams.



An online version of this release is available [here](#).