

League of Women Voters & American Association of University Women: Joint statement on SCOTUS decision Re Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Center

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The League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women, each founded more than 100 years ago, are devoted to empowering women to chart their life course. Central to this fundamental freedom is the right to decide if and when to parent. These decisions have profound impacts on all aspects of life: physical and mental health, family stability and well being, and economic and educational opportunity and destiny.

The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in the 1992 case of Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, that “[t]he ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives.”

The SCOTUS decision released today is an assault on longstanding, hard-won reproductive rights. It will have far-reaching repercussions for all Americans. In Wisconsin, a 1849 law on the books – passed 71 years before women had the right to vote! – would criminalize abortions in most cases, without an exceptions for rape or incest. This law would take effect at a time when the United States, compared to other developed countries, is a nation with high maternal and infant mortality rates, a high child poverty rate, no guaranteed access to health care or child care, no guaranteed paid maternity leave, and where two-thirds of minimum-wage workers are women, many of them struggling to support a child.

A pregnant person is not a mere vessel. The course of every pregnancy is unpredictable and carries risks to health, fertility and life. Dangerous complications can occur suddenly, when medical decisions must be made quickly – decisions that should be made between a pregnant individual and their doctor, without government intrusion.

Not only is the right to a safe and legal abortion a matter of personal freedom, it is also a matter of racial and economic justice, as limits on reproductive health services disproportionately impact Black, Brown, and low-income communities. Our basic liberty hinges on the right to control our reproductive lives. Government has no place in this decision-making, other than to ensure access to affordable, quality health care, including birth control and the privacy to make reproductive choices.

ACTIONS CITIZENS CAN TAKE:

- Ask your state legislators to support the strong majority of Wisconsinites who want the 1849 Wisconsin abortion law repealed.
- Contact your U.S. lawmakers to demand that sex-based equity be enshrined in the Constitution through the [Equal Rights Amendment](#).
- Support reproductive health organizations and supporters of abortion rights.