



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

May 6, 2022

We deplore the proposed Supreme Court ruling rolling back *Roe v. Wade* protections for women as a slap in the face of women's human rights worldwide.

It is shocking and shameful that the highest court of the United States that once stood as the shining champion of human rights to the world will soon allow states to deny American women the right to control their own body and reproductive health.

The US Women's Caucus joins the millions of American women and men who are outraged, disheartened, dismayed, disgusted, and dispirited by this news for many reasons.

We are outraged that the proposed Supreme Court decision would simply brush aside established judicial precedent by withdrawing all previous abortion rights gained over half a century, leaving every pregnant woman's reproductive fate to the political whims of 50 state legislatures, dominated by men, to debate once again.

We are disheartened that such actions are taken when the past has shown that banning abortions will not stop abortions; it will only stop *safe* abortions. The US already has the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world. Such a ruling is not a step forward for American women but a giant step backward.

We are dismayed to know that those who will be hurt most by such legislation will be society's most vulnerable -- the young, women of color, victims of sexual assault, those living in rural areas, and those too poor to travel to other states where safe procedures are legally protected. Too many women do not have adequate health care now and there are already too few health clinics addressing women's reproductive and maternity needs in rural America.

We are disgusted with the hypocrisy of politicians at both the state and national level who claim to be "pro-life" or "pro-family" while pushing radical new legislation banning abortions. Alas, too often they are the very same ones who consistently vote against strengthening the safety net for American families by expanding health care funding, subsidizing maternity care, establishing affordable day care, mandating paid maternity and family leave, giving family allowances -- all policies most developed nations already have.

Instead of raising US family safety net standards to international norms to make it economically feasible for women to give birth and raise healthy children, new legislation in states hostile to women's rights appears to punish them as well as those who try to assist them.

We are dispirited knowing that those states that ban abortions are the same ones that block initiatives successfully used in other countries to minimize the need for abortion including comprehensive sex education in schools, easy affordable access to birth control methods, and emergency birth control pills. These are crucial steps that need to be urgently expanded across the US, not thwarted, to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

We find utterly repugnant the idea that some states are using the rollback of *Roe v. Wade* to not only ban abortion completely, without exceptions for rape and incest, but also propose to prosecute as criminals those who perform abortions and those who aid them while giving incentive bounty money for those who inform authorities.

If the US Supreme Court will not defend women's human rights, it is time for the US Congress to act.

We urge the Senate to pass the Women's Protection Act of 2021, already passed by the House, to guarantee the right of women to control their own bodies and make their own reproductive health choices.

We urge the Congress to lift the time limit restriction for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) so that all women's rights, including reproductive rights, will be protected under the US Constitution.

We urge the Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signaling that the US is ready to join the rest of the civilized world in recognizing the fundamental rights of all women.

***Women will not give up our hard-won rights.
We demand respect for our human dignity and full citizenship.
We will never go back!***

We are US women and US organizations joining in solidarity to promote and collaborate on the UN women's agenda and to advocate for gender equality with women of every class, race, culture, creed, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

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