



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

Statement on US Supreme Court Roe v. Wade Decision July 5, 2022

*“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice,
but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”*

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize winner

**The US Women's Caucus at the UN will not remain silent
in the face of injustice against women's human rights.**

We will protest vehemently. In May, we deplored the US Supreme Court draft decision overturning Roe v. Wade. Now that the final decision has been issued and the implications are starkly revealed to the world, the US Women's Caucus joins the millions of Americans protesting and thoroughly condemning this ruling. We stand by women in all their diversity who need access to good health care and the right to choose. For 50 years we have enjoyed privileges earned by our foremothers. Now it is our turn to protect the rights of future generations.

The ruling itself is problematic. The highest court in the land has, for the first time in American history, retracted a right previously granted rather than upholding it. Legal experts now question the highly dubious legal arguments the Court used to deny rights enjoyed and accepted by the majority of Americans for half a century. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has noted that the Supreme Court decision is in violation of numerous international human rights treaties the US has signed. Our nation's reputation as a paragon of liberty, human rights, and justice is significantly tarnished forever.

Abortion rights now depend upon where a woman lives. Giving the abortion issue to states will lead to chaos and a patchwork of laws. In some states, the rights of a zygote will take precedent over a woman's right to make her own choice whether to have a child. In others, pregnant women and those who assist them will be harassed and hunted like animals with state-sanctioned bounties on their heads. In still others, women who are victims of rape or incest will be required to carry the child of their rapist. If they try to 'escape' their state, they will be subject to possible imprisonment for exercising what used to be their rights.

This tangled legal patchwork is NOT equal justice before the law.

There is no support system for women to accompany this ruling. The US already leads the developed world in maternal and infant mortality and this new ruling will result in the closing of hundreds of already underfunded and understaffed clinics serving women's health needs. While conservatives have praised the decision as “supporting life”, they have not lobbied for legislation to support pregnant women and have consistently voted against universal healthcare and an increased number of clinics for pre- and post-natal care. Little concern has been shown on

the state level to find homes for the 400,000+ children currently in foster care, let alone handle more that will come after this decision. No provisions have been made for new laws on paid parental leave, childcare support, or financial support during pregnancy. Women are basically left on their own to deal with their pregnancy with little assistance offered by states.

More restrictions on women's rights are coming. Justice Thomas has already noted in his concurring opinion that decisions on contraception and gay rights should be revisited by the Court. The only viable alternative now to counter this appalling regression will be legislation from Congress.

The US Women's Caucus at the UN urges Congress to do the following immediately:

* Pass specific and binding legislation to guarantee the right to privacy and a woman's right to control her body and make her own reproductive choices. Provide additional support to pregnant women through expanded healthcare, improved pre- and post-natal care, paid parental leave, subsidized child care, and financial child support.

* Withdraw the artificial deadline set for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) so that women's rights will be permanently part of the US Constitution.

* To further formalize the US commitment to American women and to regain our reputation as a defender of human rights, we urge the US Senate to join 189 other countries by ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We urge every American to demand that their members of Congress and state legislators defend comprehensive reproductive health care for women. Together we can collaborate to reverse this utterly unacceptable erosion of women's human rights in our country.

"It's a decision that she must make for herself. And when government controls that decision for her, she's being treated as less than a fully adult human responsible for her own choices."
Ruth Bader Ginsburg, US Supreme Court Justice

US feminists collaborating to advance human rights and gender equity for women and girls worldwide

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