

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement

Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney

Hearing on “The Impact of the Supreme Court’s *Dobbs* Decision on Abortion Rights and Access Across the United States” July 13, 2022

We are holding today’s hearing at a moment when women across America are feeling sorrow, anger, and disbelief.

Nineteen days ago, a right-wing majority on the Supreme Court fulfilled the Republican Party’s decades-long goal of overturning *Roe v. Wade*—and stripped away a constitutional right relied on by generations of American women. The goal of these rightwing extremists is clear: To control the bodies of women, girls, and any person who can become pregnant.

To be even more clear: The *Dobbs* decision means the government can now order people to stay pregnant—on pain of criminal punishment.

Many of us have been warning about this day for years, as states have steadily chipped away at the right to abortion.

In 2019, my first [hearing](#) as Chairwoman of this Committee examined how draconian restrictions in states like Missouri were closing down abortion providers. Last year, we held a [hearing](#) on the six-week abortion ban in Texas, which turns private citizens into bounty hunters, encouraging them to sue anyone they suspect of helping someone in need of an abortion.

Now, the Supreme Court has bulldozed straight through our rights with this extreme, dangerous, and undemocratic decision. We are already seeing the disastrous effects of this decision, as states begin criminalizing abortion.

Abortion is now illegal in 16 states, and anti-abortion legislators in other states are rushing to follow suit, threatening to make abortion inaccessible for an estimated 33 million women across the country. Doctors and patients in these states are afraid and confused about what this radical decision means for providing and receiving critical health care. Women are worried about having miscarriages or pregnancy complications, for fear that they may be investigated or prosecuted for getting the care they need.

Of course, abortion is still legal in many states, including my home state of New York, thanks to Democrats fighting for women’s rights.

But for people who can’t afford to take time off of work and pay for child care and travel expenses, going to another state to receive abortion care is simply not an option. We know that abortion bans and restrictions will disproportionately harm people of color, people with low incomes, young people, LGBTQI+ individuals, undocumented people, and so many others.

Today, we are going to hear about the terrible consequences of restricting and criminalizing abortion.

We will hear from those who are personally impacted, and from state legislators who are on the front lines defending access to abortion.

Today's hearing is especially important because Republicans are not going to stop with *Dobbs*. They are openly planning to impose a national ban on abortion. The damage that would cause is inconceivable.

As we hear about the impact of the loss of abortion rights today, I would like to ask those watching our hearing a simple question: Is this the country we want for our children? Do we want a country where our children have fewer rights than we did? Or do we want to live in a country that respects and trusts women to make the best choices for themselves and their families? The answer is clear. Americans overwhelmingly support the right to abortion.

Democrats in Congress hear you, we stand with you, and we are fighting for you.

The House has already passed the Women's Health Protection Act, which would establish a statutory right to abortion. And this week, we will pass an updated version that directly responds to *Dobbs*. Next, the Senate must act—and we shouldn't let filibuster rules stand in the way.

We also need to expand access to medication abortion. Congresswoman Pressley and I have worked with the Biden Administration to [eliminate barriers](#) to this safe, FDA-approved method of ending an early pregnancy.

I have also introduced legislation to crack down on [anti-abortion disinformation](#), and to protect access to [contraception](#) at the pharmacy counter.

President Biden signed an [executive order](#) last week to protect and expand access to abortion and all reproductive health care—and we stand ready to support his efforts.

Democrats are committed to restoring the abortion rights and access that the rightwing Supreme Court has taken away.

I now yield to Ranking Member Comer for his opening statement.

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