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Statement of Representatives Judy Chu
Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives

September 30, 2021

Chair Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, and members of the Committee, I want to thank you for holding today's important hearing. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony about the hardship faced by individuals who cannot access their full range of reproductive health options due to burdensome state laws, and how we can help thanks to my bill that passed the House last week, H.R. 3755, the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA).

Everyone deserves equal access to comprehensive and safe reproductive healthcare, no matter where they live, free from political interference. But anti-abortion extremists have been working ever since the passage of *Roe v. Wade* to put abortion services out of reach for as many Americans as possible. Texas's SB8 is just the latest example. The Texas law is egregious. It deputizes vigilantes to harass anyone helping someone obtain an abortion, from a doctor, to clinic staff, to an uber driver. And it prohibits abortions at six weeks, before most even know they're pregnant. But it is not an outlier. Since 2011, anti-abortion extremists have introduced nearly 500 of these restrictive state laws. For instance, mandatory ultrasounds, waiting periods, or funerals for fetuses are all meant to shame people who access abortion care, while needless requirements like wider doors or hospital admitting privileges are meant to make it harder for a doctor to be able to practice medicine, forcing them to close their doors or turn away patients. None of these restrictions make abortion care safer, and instead impose an undue hardship on those seeking an abortion.

This is a coordinated, nationwide strategy to eliminate abortion access and provide an opportunity to overturn or undermine *Roe*. In 2019 alone, eighteen states passed 46 laws restricting or banning abortion, including Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana, Ohio, and Alabama. The result is that abortion access is often determined by an individual's zip code. Nearly 90 percent of American counties are without a single abortion provider, and six states are down to their last abortion clinic. No constitutional right should be contingent on where you live.

My bill, the Women's Health Protection Act, would put a stop to these state-based attacks and enshrine the protections of *Roe* into law by ensuring that providers have the right to provide, and patients have the right to receive abortion care free of medically unnecessary restrictions. The Women's Health Protection Act will ensure that no matter where someone lives, no matter their zip code, abortion access is a right for all. Weakening or overturning *Roe* poses a threat to our fundamental rights to make personal decisions beyond abortion, including who to have intimate relationships with, who to marry, and whether to use contraception. That is why I am so proud that last week, the House took the historic step of passing this landmark legislation. This was the first affirmative abortion rights vote in nearly 25 years, and it shows the American people that we will not abandon them.

The Supreme Court has announced its intention to hear *Jackson Women's Health Organization v. Dobbs*, a case that directly challenges *Roe v. Wade*, this December. The Mississippi ban threatens abortion providers with severe penalties for providing abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy. It defies nearly 50 years of Supreme Court precedent, going back to *Roe*, that recognizes that the Constitution guarantees each person the right to decide whether to continue a pregnancy. There is no path for the Supreme Court to uphold Mississippi's ban without overturning *Roe*'s core holding—that every pregnant person has the right to decide whether to continue their pregnancy prior to viability. Abortion restrictions are part of the intertwined systems of oppression that deny Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) their constitutional rights. The people hurt most by abortion restrictions are those who already face barriers to accessing health care—including people of color, those working to make ends meet, members of the LGBTQI+ community, immigrants, young people, those living in rural communities, and people with disabilities.

I am pleased to say that Senate Majority Leader Schumer has announced his intention to bring WHPA to the Senate Floor for a vote, so we can ensure that, regardless of what happens at the Supreme Court, women can make decisions about their lives and bodies in consultation with their families and their physicians, not politicians.