

May 6, 2022

Global Doctors for Choice Statement on SCOTUS Draft Decision to Overturn *Roe v. Wade*

Earlier this week, a leaked draft of the United States Supreme Court majority opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* indicated that the court is poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and eliminate the constitutional right to abortion in the U.S. that has stood for nearly 50 years. If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, at least 26 states are likely to ban abortion outright causing untold harm to people across the U.S. Overturning the constitutional right to abortion and allowing states to ban abortion will not stop abortions from occurring — it will drastically limit the availability of safe abortion care and inevitably result in negative health outcomes, particularly for women and women of color living on low incomes.

In recent years, the United States has become increasingly restrictive when it comes to reproductive rights, with continuous attacks on access to abortion, contraception, and other facets of sexual and reproductive healthcare. Maternal health outcomes in the U.S. have also become increasingly dire. The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among high-income countries, nearly double that of similar countries. Ending the constitutional right to abortion will undoubtedly exacerbate appalling inequities in health and pregnancy outcomes for scores of people in the U.S. and perpetuate disenfranchisement of women.

The United States is an outlier on the global stage when it comes to the protection of reproductive rights and liberalization of abortion. Said Dr. Wendy Chavkin, co-founder of Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) and longtime reproductive rights activist: “In the past few years, abortion has been decriminalized in varied countries across three continents: Ireland; Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico; and South Korea. Will American women tolerate watching many parts of the world move forward while they lose status as autonomous adults able to make the most fundamental decisions about their bodies and lives?”

Abortion is a safe, effective, and essential healthcare service. The World Health Organization recently published updated guidelines for safe abortion care and reaffirmed that access to safe abortion is a critical piece of healthcare that is crucial to keeping women and girls safe and avoiding preventable deaths around the world. Said Dr. Mary Favier, co-chair of GDC and lead doctor of Doctors for Choice/Ireland: “United States policy makers are increasingly out of step with the rest of the world when it comes to reproductive rights and must now grasp this opportunity to reaffirm the widely supported constitutional right to abortion.”

GDC galvanizes doctors and builds their capacity to advocate for the rights of all women everywhere to sexual and reproductive health, especially to safe, legal, and accessible abortion.