

## Roe v. Wade: Why We Need It

BY KALI FOLLAND

**T**HE SUPREME COURT has repeatedly affirmed that the Constitution protected abortions as an essential liberty, which is tied to personal decisions about family, relationships, and bodily autonomy. A far-reaching, historic decision, Roe v. Wade has been overturned five decades after its initial ruling made in 1973.

First, let's review a brief history on the case of Roe v. Wade. Jane Roe, an unmarried pregnant woman, filed a lawsuit on behalf of herself challenging the Texas abortion laws, saying that they were too vague for medical professionals to follow. At the time, Texas made abortion illegal unless it endangered the mother's life. In Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decided that it was a fundamental right to privacy, and the person had a right to choose whether or not they'd have an abortion. In addition, it validates the government's interest in public health and prenatal life.

The decision to overturn Roe v. Wade was made by the Supreme Court in early May of 2022. This ruling indicates that abortion rights will be revoked from nearly half the states immediately. Just weeks after the decision was made, nearly 13 trigger bans were in effect and abortion was made illegal in multiple states.

"Trigger bans" are newer laws pushed through by anti-abortion legislators in many states in anticipation of the Supreme Court's ruling. According to a NPR News article, a new analysis created by Guttmacher Institute, states such as South Dakota, Kentucky, and Louisiana had laws in place that lawmakers designed to specifically take effect after the fall of the Roe v. Wade paradigm.

Idaho, Tennessee and Texas already have laws against abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, now have similar laws in effect after 30 days. Courts have blocked many laws in response to the gestational bans on abortion during various stages of pregnancy. Now laws in Georgia, Ohio and Idaho ban abortions six weeks after pregnancy take effect immediately. In addition, a law that was recently enacted in Oklahoma makes performing an abortion or terminating pregnancy a felony and is punishable by prison time. Other restrictions include limiting where, by whom, and under what conditions abortion is provided, including parental notification or consent for abortions involving minors.

Meanwhile, legal uncertainty ensues as the court's decision poses new questions on how the other courts apply specific language of the final decision to individual state laws. For example, a new law was passed in Kentucky includes new requirements for medication abortion pills, and an expulsion for anyone out of state illegally providing abortion pills to Kentuckians. How these types of laws will be enforced remains unclear.

Whereas some states are trying to expand access to abortion in preparation for patients traveling from

restrictive states, Connecticut has passed a legislation that would protect abortion providers from out of state law suits.

While more regulations from trigger ban and expand access to abortion states are yet to be concluded, states are free to ban abortion for any reason. Under these circumstances, some American Citizens are concerned that the decision can be applied to other major cases such as legalized gay marriage, the criminalization for homosexual conduct, and protected rights of people and their access to contraception.

Personally, I feel distraught about the fact that women aren't able to do what they want with their bodies. I feel sympathetic towards the victims (especially minors) who are in states that wouldn't allow an abortion for cases of rape or incest (or under any circumstance for that matter). It feels to me like a war against women.

In addition, I think it is important to add more funding to the U.S. school systems, our foster care systems, healthcare systems and improve sex education for our classrooms. I feel privileged to live in a state like Minnesota where I not only have been very informed in my health classes from elementary to high school, but also have access to contraception. I feel like a lot of our culture in America has very mixed views on sexuality. And it seems to me like a majority make it out to be dirty in some way when it's natural and part of being human.

As far as foster care systems are concerned, there's a lot that needs to be reformed. There's countless stories of adoptees who have aged out of the foster care system with no place to call home. A lot of them end up as addicts, in the prison system, or homeless because they are not equipped with the right skills to manage themselves or their mental health. I think social workers need to be more careful with adoption placements because of numerous accounts of abuse that goes on behind closed doors.

A lot of women forced to carry their pregnancy to term don't have enough support. I think the overturning of Roe V. Wade has created bigger problems for our country, and it's likely none of these things I have listed are going to be fixed anytime soon. Not only am I afraid for the women or female identifying people in our country, but I am angry about all of this, and there needs to be change.

## What the Women in Iran Can Teach Us

BY KACIE DUNCAN



Photo Credit: Albert Stoynov

**A**round the world, people have heavy hearts filled with anger and sadness as we watch the rights of women be challenged once more. After the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who was arrested for what the government deemed as incorrectly wearing her hijab, she later died in the custody of the police under suspicious circumstances.

I could sit here and write about what the women in Iran are going through or how proud I am to call myself a woman as these brave women protest and riot in defiance of the Iran patriarchy, but I'm not going to do that. Instead, I'm going to

look at something that I think is just as important in relation to the women in Iran right now.

When I first heard about what was happening in Iran, I had one thought: why is religion once again being used to oppress women? It is a question I wish I knew the answer to and solution for.

All I can say is that I am angry. Not only am I angry that women are, once again, having to fight for basic human rights and to be treated with basic human decency, but because of people using something that should be sacred and beautiful as a tool for oppression.

I myself am no longer religious. However, as someone who was once very religious, I know how special it is to be part of a religion. It absolutely breaks my heart to think about how someone's life and beliefs are being used against them as a tool to hurt and control them. This is not only a problem in Iran, nor is it just a problem within the Islamic religion. I believe this is an issue in a majority of religions, including Christianity. I myself have had first-hand experience with being mistreated within churches simply because I am a woman. If what is happening in Iran teaches us anything, let it teach us that religion should not be used as a tool of oppression.

Religion should not be used as a form of promoting inequality and harm. I urge us all to stand up against those who try to use religion as a form of control and power. We live in a country that promotes freedom of religion, but I beg you all to remember that religion and inequality do not need to go hand in hand. It is more than possible for us to reach a point where religion and feminism are not paradoxical.