

Protect Abortion Access and Reproductive Rights

On June 24 the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which guaranteed the right to abortion, in its *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* ruling. JCPA [condemned this decision](#), which we do not believe represents the will of the people nor is in the best interest of the country. Access to safe, affordable, and legal abortion and reproductive health care is a priority for JCPA, rooted in our long-standing support for reproductive rights and religious liberty. According to the Pew Research Center, 83% of Jews believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

This ruling is already having devastating outcomes, undermining reproductive freedom, endangering public health, and criminalizing of those who provide, support, or obtain abortions. It will disproportionately impact people of color, those who are low-income, and young people.

Our nation is facing a public health crisis. Thirteen states have “trigger laws” automatically banning abortion while dozens more are taking up bills to ban and criminalize those who seek abortions and those who provide abortion care. States where abortion is already banned are considering even more extreme measures, including criminalizing crossing state lines to get an abortion, and removing exceptions for rape, incest, or health of the person.

Restrictions are already harming people across the nation. For example, a 10-year-old rape survivor had to travel out of state for an abortion because she was one day outside of the six-week ban. Others have been taken off critical medications for dangerous autoimmune disorders because they have been deemed “viablely fertile.” State governments are now forcing people to carry babies to term, disregarding citizens’ health, wellbeing, and right to bodily autonomy.

Talking Points

- **Judaism compels us to stand for *all* life, and we prioritize the *life and health of a pregnant person*.** While we treat a fetus with great significance, it does not merit the status of a person until birth and then it has equal status with the person giving birth. If the fetus endangers a person’s life physically or through mental anguish, Jewish law supports abortion. Rabbis and other clergy should not fear liability when providing counseling consistent with their religious beliefs. Jewish law never supports abortion bans without exception.
- **Citizens have a right to make decisions about their own bodily autonomy.** The government should never be allowed to compel its citizens to compromise that autonomy. The state is not allowed to mandate even life-saving organ donation, even after death.
- **Criminalizing abortion is a crisis for democracy.** JCPA believes in the foundational principle of separation of church and state, which prohibits the governmental imposition of religious beliefs. Prohibiting abortion access enshrines a narrow religious perspective into law, violating the Establishment Clause, and is contrary to Jewish law, traditions, and our principal value of saving a life.

- **Abortion bans do not stop abortions; they only stop safe abortions.** Studies show that they lead to poor health outcomes, long-term poverty, and other adverse health and economic impacts.

Action Request

Urge the Senate to pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (H.R. 8296), the Ensuring Women’s Right to Reproductive Freedom Act (H.R. 8297), and the Right to Contraception Act (H.R. 8373).

- The **Women’s Health Protection Act** would enable health care providers to deliver abortion services free from medically unnecessary limitations, protecting access around the country.
- The **Ensuring Women’s Right to Reproductive Freedom Act** would reaffirm the right to travel out-of-state to seek abortion care and help those who do. Anti-abortion officials are already attempting to prohibit people from traveling across state lines to access or provide abortion care—a violation of the constitutional right to interstate travel.
- The **Right to Contraception Act** would codify the right to access and use contraceptives and ensure health care providers’ right to provide contraceptives and relevant information. It would also explicitly allow the Justice Department and providers to sue for noncompliance.
- All three bills passed the House and now await action in the Senate, where they must garner 60 votes to clear the filibuster. We thank those in the House of Representatives who supported these bills.

Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America has long standing policy of not joining in JCPA [statements] on reproductive rights:

[The Orthodox Union] cannot endorse a public policy that does not reflect the complex response of halacha to the abortion issue. In most circumstances, the halacha proscribes abortion, but there are cases in which halacha permits and indeed mandates abortion. The question of abortion is a sensitive one and personal decisions in this area should be made in consultation with recognized halachic authorities.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network, representing local Jewish community relations councils and national Jewish agencies. Together our network builds consensus on behalf of the entire Jewish community to promote a just and pluralistic American society, advocate for human rights around the world, and support peace and security in Israel.