



EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW

FOLIO 51  
VOLUME XXIV  
REPRODUCTIVE  
JUSTICE

# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for picking up this year's Winter issue of Folio 51, Horace Mann's Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality publication!

This issue consists of a year's work of writing, editing, artwork, and design that considers and challenges the notion of reproductive justice within the modern world. In 2022, with the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* case, the US Supreme Court held that the United States Constitution does not guarantee the right to an abortion, effectively overturning the landmark court decision from 1973, *Roe v. Wade*. Consequently, authority regarding abortion regulation was returned to states, which posed an existential threat to the basic rights of millions of American women to their own bodies. This *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision has and will continue to drastically alter the landscape of reproductive rights, with critical impacts materializing particularly for marginalized groups throughout the US. Therefore, Folio 51 has dedicated this year's Winter issue to investigations of the multidimensional facets of reproductive rights.

Our writers explore the landscape of reproductive rights both locally, in New York City, and internationally, such as in Latin America. They process how the issue has affected them personally, in the opinion piece, *Reproduction and Religion: My Perspectives as a Reform Jewish Young Woman*, and through a global standpoint, such as in the article, *Social Media and its Impacts on Reproductive Justice Education*.

As Folio 51, we interrogate the past, present, and future, and hope to ignite thought-provoking and bias-shattering discussions through our writing. As you read this issue, we hope that you incorporate the multitude of opinions, perspectives, and mediums presented within your conception of reproductive justice.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the writers, editors, designers, and our art director Isabelle Kim. We really appreciate your passion and dedication to this issue. Additionally, we all extend our immense gratitude to Dr. Groppi and Ms. Little for their support and guidance. Please enjoy!

Most sincerely,

Naomi Gelfer & Rani Ogden

Co-Editors-in-Chief, Volume XXIV

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WINTER 2024

# REFLECTION ON THE PAST: THE 2022 MI

## Recalling Key Issues

By Asha

On the surface, it appears that the Supreme Court's decision to overturn decades of precedent in its *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* was a massive win for the Republican Party and a manifestation of their decades long quest to advance anti-abortion policy. In many ways, however, this decision—one of the most infamous in modern history—crippled the Republican Party's performance in the 2022 midterms, despite their numerous advantages. Questions remain about what confluence of factors led to this widespread rebuke of Republican policies and around the broader implications of the changing politics of abortion on our electoral landscape.

Conventional political wisdom holds that the President's party will perform poorly in midterms, a pattern so strong that out of the last 20 midterms, 19 have seen the party in power end up without control of both houses of the legislature. Considering President Biden's low approval rate, which was only 40% on the eve of the midterms, many experts assumed the election would be a clear rejection of Biden's policies and political decisions. Additionally, with the Consumer Confidence Index Expectations Index, a measure of consumers' outlook on the short-term economic future, which hovered around 110 until recently, at only 82.4, many believed ordinary Americans would turn to the Republican party. Recent polls have shown that 12% more Americans trust Republicans with the economy than trust Democrats, which seemed a worrying sign for Democrats in a nation where the economy was top of mind for most voters.

Despite all of these troubling omens, the Democrats performed exceedingly well in the midterms, flipping Pennsylvania to gain seats and a majority in the Senate and losing the House by only five votes. Many experts cite *Dobbs* and concerns about state level abortion restrictions as motivating factors in Democrats success, as they seem to have not only mobilized and energized the Democratic base, but also flipped Republican voters, 27 percent of whom were disappointed in the *Dobbs* decision. In no small part due to pro-abortion rights Republican voters, all five ballot measures related to abortion were decided on the pro-reproductive rights side, even in deep red states like Kentucky. And the success of Democratic candidates in purple states likely comes down to their ability to frame Republican anti-abortion views as extreme and force them onto the defensive, capitalizing on the power of abortion rights to mobilize voters on both sides of the aisle.

The tremendous power of abortion rights debates to sway an election raises ques-





# MIDTERM ELECTION IN RELATION TO ROE

## before the Midterms

### Tandon



tions about how it will impact future elections, especially the fast approaching 2024 election. Despite not making a formal announcement, President Biden has confirmed that he “intends” to run, reducing uncertainty about the Democratic party’s nominee. On the other side of the aisle, however, former President Trump has announced his intention to run, and

may face off against Ron Desantis, the Governor of Florida, who has yet to announce whether he will run.

A recent poll of anti-abortion voters has shown that 54% prefer Desantis as the Republican candidate in 2024, compared to only 19% that support Trump, with other Republican candidates making up the rest of the votes. With Trump noting the effect of “the abortion issue” on the midterms and beginning to move the issue to the back-burner,

many anti-abortion groups like Students for Life, which have historically been important members of Trump’s coalition, have withheld their support for his candidacy.

Another key facet of abortion rights that will likely have a large bearing over 2024 is the

usage and distribution of abortion pills, which allow women to end a pregnancy at home safely within the first ten weeks. President Biden has attempted to protect access to these medication abortions through a memorandum that seeks to develop ways to make these pills more accessible to those who need them across the country. In contrast, in his role as Governor, Desantis has blocked Florida pharmacies from filling prescriptions for these pills and seems to be in staunch opposition to their use. Because this medication falls under the purview of the FDA and thus the President, questions around how to handle them will likely be abundant in the Republican primaries leading up to 2024, as many staunch anti-abortion groups believe they must be banned but many moderate Republicans may be turned off by a complete ban. It is clear that abortion rights were a deciding factor in the 2022 midterms, and they will likely go on to be a key issue in the Republican party where candidates will have to reconcile appealing to conservative anti-abortion groups and attracting more moderate voters.

"The tremendous power of abortion rights debates to sway an election raises questions about how it will impact future elections, especially the fast approaching 2024 election."

# A HISTORY OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

By Neeraj

Prominent reproductive rights organizations in modern-day United States include Planned Parenthood, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice. However, many of these organizations have a long line of history before they became well-known establishments.

Planned Parenthood, the nation's leading provider of affordable health care and sex education, has more than six hundred health centers across the United States, providing over 2.4 million people with services annually. In 2021, the organization educated and provided information to over 178 million people through its website. Planned Parenthood traces its roots back to a woman named Margaret Sanger.

After Sanger's mother suffered multiple miscarriages which took a toll on her body, Sanger visited Europe to learn about birth control meth-

ods, since they were it was illegal to learn about in the US. She then opened the nation's first birth control clinic in Brownsville, Brooklyn on October 16th, 1916 alongside her sister Ethel Byrne and activist Fania Mindell, where people would come for advice and information on birth control. Devastatingly, the police raided the clinic nine days after it opened, shutting it down and charging the women with jail time. In jail, Sanger continued to educate other inmates about birth control. Then, in 1923, Sanger opened another clinic called the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in Manhattan where she gave birth control devices to women. She merged it with the American Birth Control League, which researched statistics relating to famine and population growth. The merge created what we now know as Planned Parenthood® Federation of



"In 2021, [Planned Parenthood] educated and provided information to over 178 million people through its website. Planned Parenthood traces its roots back to a woman named Margaret Sanger."

After Sanger's mother suffered multiple miscarriages which took a toll on her body, Sanger visited Europe to learn about birth control meth-

America, Inc. (PPFA®).

It is important to note that Sanger believed in eugenics, which is the ideology that planned breeding can improve society by creating more desirable traits, almost always rooted in racism. She was also a frequent speaker with the women's sect of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), promoting birth control. Since then, Planned Parenthood has denounced Sanger's beliefs and removed her name from their health center. Although Sanger founded the first birth control center, her racist ideals ultimately undermined her efforts because her views on who deserves access to reproductive rights were very limited.

# WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

va Patel

In June of 1994, a group of Black women who called themselves the Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice gathered in Chicago and coined the more intersectional term “reproductive justice” due to the lack of support for women of color. They believed that a movement run by wealthy white women was not effective for

Collective was formed, which was a group made up of sixteen different organizations of women of color. This group became, and still is, one of the main advocates for the intersectional reproductive justice movement.



the needs of marginalized women such as women of color and transgender women. The women drafted a statement with eight hundred signatures called “Black Women on Health Care Reform,” which detailed what acts Congress should pass to reform health care. It was published in the ads section of the Washington Post on August 16th, 1994, and was addressed to “Members of Congress.” The statement contained lines such as “we are particularly concerned for the full range of reproductive services under health care reform legislation” and “reproductive freedom is a life or death issue for many Black women.” They asserted that “the plan must include strong anti-discriminatory provisions to ensure the protection of all women of color, the elderly, the poor, those with disabilities, and must not discriminate based on sexual orientation.” In 1997, a few years after the statement, the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice





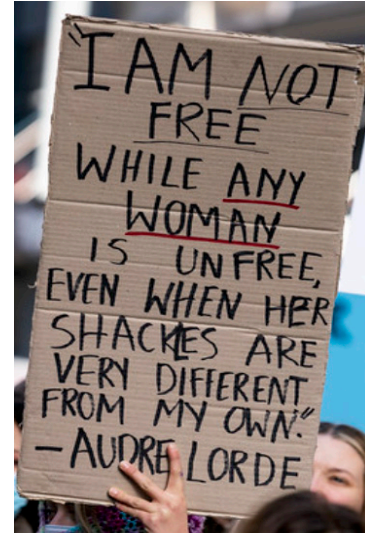
# Contextualizing Reproductive Justice as an Intersectional Issue

By Francesca Finzi

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and the closure of reproductive health facilities, left 17 million people without access to reproductive healthcare, including the ability to get an abortion. But even prior to the reversal of *Roe*, a part of the population lacked access to reproductive healthcare because of issues including racism, indigenous oppression, poverty, ableisms, and LGBTQ+ discrimination. In 2017, these issues contributed to 27 different abortion deserts found throughout the country. An abortion desert is defined as a city or town with a population of over 100,000 where one must travel over 100 miles to reach an abortion clinic. (UCSF). Furthermore, even in areas where abortion clinics were available, discrimination based on the issues identified led to inequality in the reproductive health care system. Because there is no singular experience of womanhood, the intersectionality of these issues can provide insight into how one's experience of womanhood might differ from another experience.

"The Center for Disease Control data indicates prior to the reversal of *Roe*, Black and Indigenous women had over twice the mortality rate of white women during childbirth."

The impact on race on reproductive health is significant. The Center for Disease Control data indicates prior to the reversal of *Roe*, Black and Indigenous women had over twice the mortality rate of white women during childbirth. Post-*Roe*, the CDC estimates that this mortality rate will



rise by 35% for Black women, as compared to 20% for all women. Public health studies suggest that a possible cause for these disparities is a lack of education about serious, potentially life-threatening conditions that can remain hidden throughout a woman's pregnancy and severely complicate labor or postpartum recovery. Additionally, the Washington Post reports that "Black women face racism and discrimination in the U.S. health-care system. In numerous public health studies, Black patients report that medical professionals dismiss their symptoms and complaints, misdiagnose their conditions, fail to prescribe proper medication and treatments, and do not refer them to medical specialists for care." Without access to reproductive health facilities in their communities, and people who truly take an interest in treating them, the lack of education about issues that Black and Indigenous women should be on the look-out for, will continue to be a problem.

Ability, especially in relation to socioeconomic status and poverty, also limits access to reproductive healthcare. The National Disability Institute found that the poverty rate for disabled women is more than double that of able bodied women, and a higher number of disabled women



cannot afford reproductive health care, whether it be basic education about sexual wellness, or an abortion. Finally, since the overturning of Roe, some states have already passed laws banning abortions, even in the case of a serious fetal genetic anomaly, a genetic mutation causing a particular disease or condition. In some cases, parents who are already facing their own struggles with different abilities, may not feel fit to properly provide for a child with a genetic condition or the condition may result in an abysmal quality of life, and these laws force them to carry the child to term. A new law in Ohio that was just passed by the Sixth circuit criminalizes all abortions, even following the diagnosis of a genetic illness including Down Syndrome, a significant threat to the life of the mother. Significantly, the people proposing and passing these bills are also the ones who vote against disability rights laws, actively adding to the difficulty that comes with raising a child. ACLU reports “While Ohio politicians are passing abortion bans under the guise of disability rights, Ohio parents of children with disabilities are struggling to afford the services their children need to thrive.”

LGBTQ+ discrimination is another area where an individual patient will likely be impacted by the greater number of abortion deserts post Roe. Even with Roe still in place in 2021, transgender

men faced significant discrimination with respect to reproductive services. According to ABC news, the number of individuals identifying as transgender who may need access to these services are living in the same parts of the country that are becoming abortion deserts post Roe. And given that transgender individuals face a great risk of sexual assault, the need for access to reproductive care and abortion is not speculative. A transgender man reported to ABC news during an interview that he ultimately decided to get a hysterectomy because he couldn't risk being denied abortion access. That someone would have to choose a hysterectomy, which are extremely invasive, irreversible, and pose various risks to short and long-term health, over a straightforward termination, especially if that choice is given only because of the patient's identity as LGBTQ+, is cruel.

If women only had to deal with Roe in a vacuum, they may be able to galvanize a solution to overcome the denial of access to basic reproductive health care. However, when the intersectionality of race, indigenous oppression, poverty, ableism, and LGBTQ+ discrimination, is factored into the equation, it seems virtually impossible to easily find solutions that will serve all women.



WINTER 2024

# REPRODUCTION AND RELIGION: PERSPECTIVE

By Naomi

On January 22, 1973, restrictive state regulation of abortion was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. A victory: the American women's right to privacy, sexual healthcare, and choice was immortalized by our country and reaffirmed under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Or so we thought.

First, a history lesson: the story of *Roe v. Wade* fascinates me. Jane Roe, born "Norma McCorvey" and later anonymized her name, lived in Texas under the custody of a single alcoholic mother. By the time McCorvey was the very same age as me, she was married and pregnant: at 16 years of age, McCorvey was married, impregnated, and divorced before the birth of her first child, whom she relinquished into the custody of her turbulent mother. I still have trouble flipping eggs on a frying pan without breaking them in half; however, facing a cold, harsh reality of harboring a life within her, only halfway through her teenage years after being raised in an insecure household, McCorvey

had no choice but to carry a pregnancy to term before giving her own child away.

Pregnant again in 1969, McCorvey wanted an abortion, which was inaccessible to her unless her life became threatened by the pregnancy. Subsequently, McCorvey was referred to feminist lawyers, Linda Coffee and Sarah Weddington, who were searching for a client to challenge abortion laws. By the time Coffee and Weddington changed the case to a class-action lawsuit and a federal judge panel ruled that Texas's abortion laws were unconstitutional, McCorvey gave birth and gave the child up for adoption; however, when the state of Texas appealed, the Supreme Court ruled that women had the right to an abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy, "free of interference by the state," in 1973.



"By protecting a woman's right to an abortion in the first trimester, the Supreme Court protected a woman's status as a human being: "Choice" is dignity. Moreover, "choice" is freedom.."

By protecting a woman's right to an abortion in the first trimester, the Supreme Court protected a woman's status as a human being: "Choice" is dignity. Moreover, "choice" is freedom. There is living, breathing horror in forceful impregnation being followed by an inescapable life of supporting a child one did not choose to conceive, with the alternative to this action being jail-time on the count

# LIVES AS A YOUNG REFORM JEWISH WOMAN

ni Gelfer

of murder. I was struck by a fraction of the possibilities of what that horror could feel like on June 24, 2022, standing on line for the Cyclone at Coney Island — my own body was the topic of a Supreme Court decision, and I had just potentially lost my control over it, as millions of women in states such as Mississippi, Missouri, Louisiana — maternal care “deserts” — truly did.



At around noon on June 24, 2022, a scorchingly hot, sunny day in New York City, I suddenly couldn't figure out whether my stomach was churning because of the twists and turns of the Cyclone, or because of the news headlines crowding my phone. That day, I experienced the harrowing irony of tapping into my childhood on Brighton Beach, while jarringly being forced to “grow up”: my mind cycled through infinite possibilities of women being robbed of their right to choose becoming realities. At the very same time, in my home borough of Manhattan, the rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral, along with parishioners and priests, rejoiced over the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Margaret H. Hartshorn, the chairman of the board of Heartbeat International, a network of anti-abortion pregnancy centers, described this turning point for America as “just a

"Judaism seeks to protect existing life throughout all stages of pregnancy: a fetus is not considered a person under Jewish law and, until the moment of its first breath, does not have the same rights of a living woman, protecting a woman's complete right to abortion."

phenomenal work of the Lord.” When reading this quote and invocation of religious rhetoric, I am reminded that the pro-life movement and religion are linked, especially inextricably in my mind. As Elizabeth Dias of the New York Times put it, since many anti-abortion groups are grounded in Catholic or evangelical principles, the Supreme Court's decision “was not just a political victory but a spiritual one.” However, for me, a reform Jewish woman, the overturning of Roe v. Wade was a culmination of devastating spiritual and personal loss.

My sense of Judaism morally calls for the mitzvah (commandment) of saving the life of a mother when her pregnancy puts her at risk, whether that risk be death or serious mental health complications. Ultimately, Judaism seeks to protect existing life throughout all stages of pregnancy: a fetus is not considered a person under Jewish law and, until the moment of its first breath, does not have the same rights of a living woman, protecting a woman's complete right to abortion. Therefore, as the National Council of Jewish



# RERPRODUCTION AND RELIGION

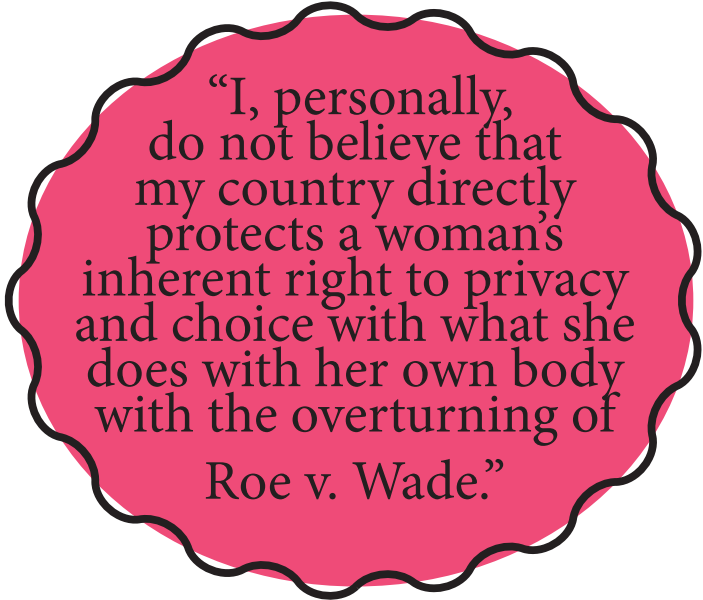
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Women reminds us, the First Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees that no one Moreover, Orthodox conceptions of Jewish law have expanded to allow for abortions when pregnancy jeopardizes the mother's life due to severe pain and suffering, both physiological and psychological. Conservative Judaism explains that "neither viability or a woman's right to choose is the basis of Jewish law on abortion, although they play a role only indirectly." Critically, the woman's life and overall health is what matters to Jewish law, where reform Judaism affirms a pregnant individual's complete responsibility to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy.

In regards to the question of "where, at what point in a pregnancy, does life begin," the rabbinic system does not see abortion as murder, because the fetus is not believed to be alive: an act of murder inherently involves the termination of a life, but as Judaism does not view a fetus as alive, abortions are rendered incomparable to murder. Effectively, the rights and life of a mother are always paramount to the rights of a fetus, until the moment of birth.

Ultimately, Judaism renders the conversation about a fetus's "right to life" void, and rather, explores the issue of the "right to be born." Specifically, while the right to life is seen as "absolute," the right to be born is relative to whenever one believes life actually

begins. Every single person is entitled to their own spiritual beliefs as to when life begins -- Jewish law dictates that whenever "life" may begin before birth, this is not the life of a human being: pre-human "life" is not human life, and is not valued as such. Furthermore, a sense of spiritualism regards the existence



"I, personally, do not believe that my country directly protects a woman's inherent right to privacy and choice with what she does with her own body with the overturning of Roe v. Wade."

of my soul as "immortal," meaning my soul exists whether or not I ever experience human life: an abortion does not stunt the omnipresence of a soul. Under Jewish law, abortion is neither murder nor "ensoulment."

I, personally, do not believe that my country directly protects a woman's inherent right to privacy and choice with what she does with her own body with the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Further, I find personal truth in the National Council of Jewish Women's analysis that as Jewish values compel us to



full access to safe and legal abortion care as basic health care, extreme restrictions on abortion rights in certain states such as Texas and Kentucky, where there are no exceptions for rape or incest, violate the Jewish people’s right to justly carry out abortions. Yet, for all the research I’ve done on Judaism and abortion, I find solace in my religion where my life, my rights, and the health of my body and mind are valued above all extenuating circumstances. Effectively, just because I have the ability to cultivate life and give birth does not mean I am obligated to, and my reform Jewish-“ness” supports me in that. As a teenage girl at Horace Mann, my daily life is not centered around my religion, but my personal way of coping with the turbulence in America regarding abortion rights, 50 years after first-trimester abortions were originally enshrined as constitutional, has been through connecting with my religion. I also recognize my privilege in living in New

York City, where abortions are legal for adults and minors for any reason up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, or later depending on the health of the mother.

Tapping into my spirituality has lent me a glimmer of peace in re-affirming my personhood and freedoms by the right to choose. “Choice” is a freedom, and, especially with the overturning of Roe v. Wade, a privilege.

"I find solace in my religion where my life, my rights, and the health of my body and mind are valued above all extenuating circumstances."

# REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

By Emma

The United States Supreme Court decision *Dobbs v. Jackson* overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, a ruling that removed the constitutional right to abortions. This case put the eyes of the world on the United States, as *Roe v. Wade* served as a landmark ruling in the fight for reproductive rights and women's bodily autonomy in many other countries. The *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision is also an irrational approach to lowering abortion rates because statistics show that abortion rates decrease in countries where it is legal, and actually increase in countries where there are restrictions. If the goal for politicians arguing for bans on abortion is to lower the number of people undergoing this procedure, then studies demonstrate that the effective way to do this is to let the pregnant person make that decision for themselves. Reproductive rights movements around the world sparked or strengthened in the wake of this decision and the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*.

" If the goal for politicians arguing for bans on abortion is to lower the number of people undergoing this procedure, then studies demonstrate that the effective way to do this is to let the pregnant person make that decision for themselves."

The Green Wave is a major feminist movement in Latin America for reproductive rights. It originated in Argentina, but its influence spread throughout Latin America and even further. Since the reversal of *Roe*, activists in the United States have looked to those who had been successful in other countries. Latin America had success with the Green Wave, so activists in the United States have sought inspiration and strategy from this movement.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are six of thirty-three countries that still have a full ban on abortion. A full ban includes cases where the person pregnant is at risk of death, when the pregnancy jeopardizes the person's health, when the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest, and when the pregnancy is known to be unviable. The countries that have this kind of ban are the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Suriname. Where access to abortion is legal to any degree in Latin America, there are two main models of regulations: the grounds model and the mix model. or instance, when the pregnancy results from rape or incest, increases the already present risk for the life and/or health of the pregnant person, or the pregnancy is unviable. Data from a multitude of organizations reports that the grounds model is insufficient for a variety of reasons, including possible criminal prosecution and stigma associated with the .



# RIGHTS ON A GLOBAL SCALE

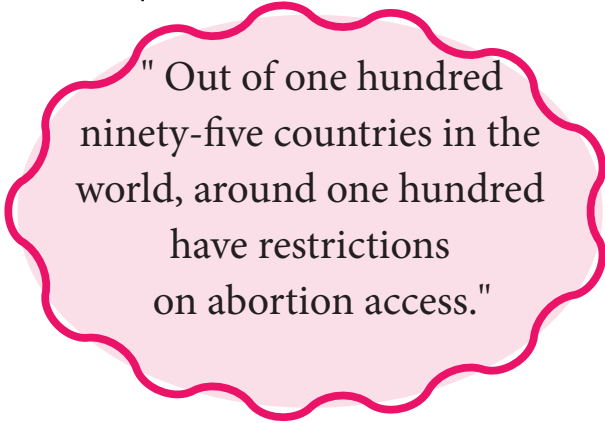
Manuella Odell

procedure. On the other set of restrictions, there is the mix model, which grants legal access to abortion up until a certain point in the pregnancy, after which the grounds model goes into effect. This model has taken effect in Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, and in some parts of Mexico. In these instances, abortion is not fully legal, but the model is much more lenient than the grounds model.

Countries around the world have worked for centuries to secure the right to abortion. In countries where these movements were successful, the fight has refocused to the more specific battles for access to these services, better quality and safer abortion care, and maternal survival. Nearly ninety percent of abortions in regions where it is legal and unrestricted are considered safe. This contrasts greatly with the much lower twenty-five percent that are considered safe in countries where the procedure is illegal or highly restricted. Additionally, about five to thirteen percent of deaths in mothers worldwide are the result of complications from unsafe abortions. The Center for Reproductive Rights created a scale with the most basic levels of abortion restrictions in each country in the world. The scale they used went from least access, which is countries where the procedure is prohibited, to saving the person's life, to preserving the health of the person, on social or economic grounds, to, finally, on request.

Out of one hundred ninety-five countries in

the world, around one hundred have restrictions on abortion access. In addition the language regarding the regulations is usually very vague, making doctors doubt whether they are legally permitted to perform the procedure on a case-to-case basis. As a result, many women are often denied an abortion



" Out of one hundred ninety-five countries in the world, around one hundred have restrictions on abortion access."

because the doctor does not want to risk the possible consequences of performing the procedure.

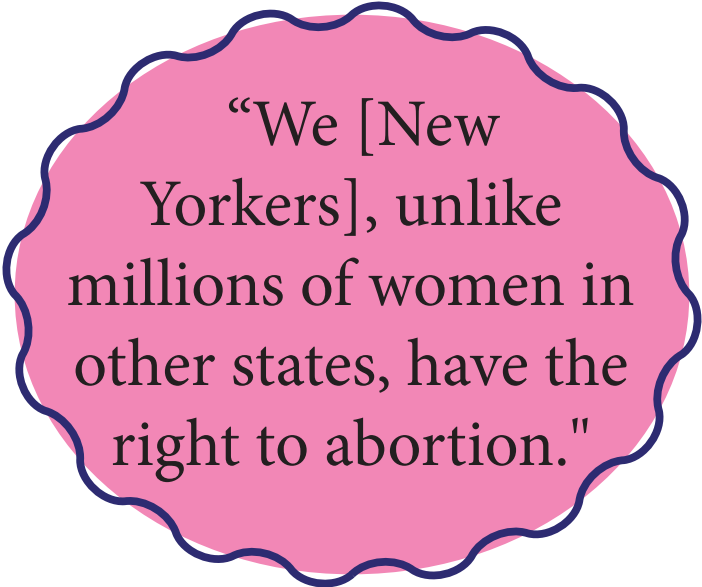
Since 2000, most countries' bans/restrictions on abortion have decreased in number and severity, except for a few countries, including the United States and Nicaragua. Various international organizations have established that access to safe abortion is a human right, including the UN Human Rights Committee, the European Court of Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and many others. However, the right to abortion, no matter the individual circumstances of the pregnant person, remains an area of uncertainty for many women in the world.

# NEW YORK VS. THE PROBLEM

By Sienna Tolani

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In 1973, the United States Supreme Court enforced Roe in the Roe vs. Wade case, recognizing a woman's right to abortion if she pleases and restricting lawmakers in the government from having a say in the right. This enforcement further prohibited the criminalization of abortion and only had certain bans around abortion such as forbidding it in the 3rd trimester. In June of 2022, nearly 50 years later and in a time thought to be even more progressive and inclusive, Roe vs. Wade was overturned by the United States Supreme Court during the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization case. Beginning this past summer, the U.S. The National Constitution no longer acknowledges abortion as a right, leaving decisions regarding its legalization in the hands of politicians with opposing opinions, some of which are direct attacks on all women. State-government-issued abortion bans which were once blocked by the Supreme Court ruling that abortion was legal nationwide can now fall into place. These bans, known as trigger bans, and laws from before the first Roe vs. Wade case has been implemented, differing from other state governments, like New York, which allows for abortion. About 10 million women live in the state of New York and as a portion of that large statistic, it is important that we remain aware of the status of reproductive



“We [New Yorkers], unlike millions of women in other states, have the right to abortion.”

rights within the state. We, unlike millions of women in other states, have the right to abortion- something that should be given across the globe but still is only granted to a lucky fraction of women.

First officially legalized in the state in 1970, abortion has remained ever-present in New York before and after Roe vs. Wade was overturned. However, over this course of time, more precautions and shields have been set in place by the state government in order to further ensure every woman's right to an abortion. In a 2019 legislature, New York's state government clarified that abortion after the twenty-four-week mark was illegal unless the mother's life was threatened (mentally or physically) but any action prior was tolerated. In that, abortion was established as a fundamental right in a

statutory precaution, dictating that anyone may refuse or choose to contracept or sterilize their birth. A pregnant individual can choose whether they carry the baby to term, birth it, or abort it. Furthermore, the state cannot discriminate or refuse to allow rights to abortion. Although private insurance must cover abortion care, New York state publicly funds abortion and encourages abortion clinics, with governor Kathy Hochul setting aside a whopping 35 million dollars from state funding in 2022 for the security of providers and clinics and to broaden provider capacity. Also in 2022, more precautions were enacted to protect healthcare/abortion providers from legal troubles and even in some cases, allow them to collect compensation.

"...  
it is significant  
that we don't allow  
ourselves to be distanced  
from the issue simply because  
it isn't taking place in New  
York where it would  
directly affect us."

As emphasized before, New York is different from other states in terms of its legalization of abortion, and although we have access to it whenever we need it

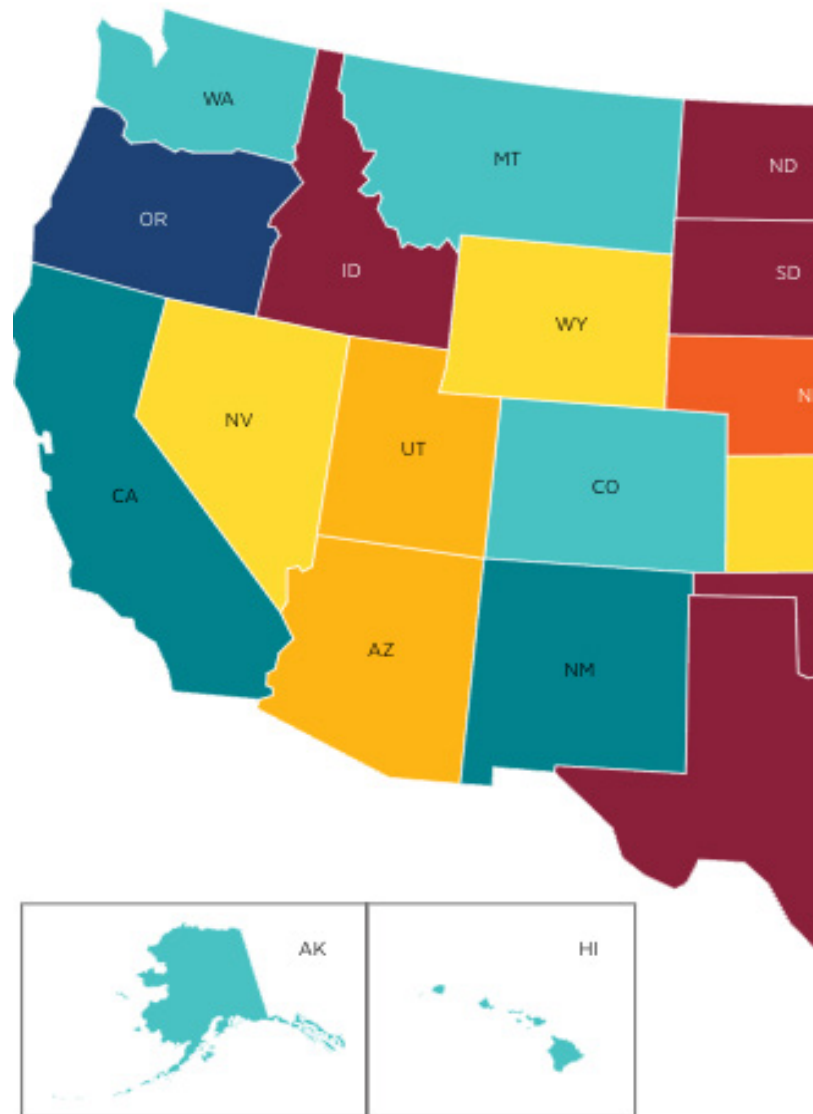
in locations within reachable proximity, there are still currently thirteen states in which abortion is illegal due to trigger bans which are being enforced. These states are the following: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. It is important to note that in Georgia abortion has also been banned at 6 weeks, which is before a majority of women show signs of pregnancy and are aware they are pregnant therefore, it is hardly any better than banning abortion as a whole. In all these states, except for West Virginia and Mississippi, abortion is banned without exceptions for rape and West Virginia is the only one that authorizes abortion in the case of incest. However, some bans have been blocked in the states of Montana, North Dakota, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Wyoming, Utah, and Arizona. Meanwhile, gestational limits, abortion bans depending on how many weeks along a woman is, have been placed in Florida (15 weeks), Arizona (15 weeks), Utah (18 weeks), and North Carolina (20 weeks). As time passes, controversies amongst activists and even within courthouses arise and call for new legislation. For example, in Florida, the right to abortion was recognized in the state constitution 30 years ago yet, now it is being questioned as the court there has grown more conservative. Out of insurance, states like New York have set in place newer precautions to further cement that abortion is a fundamental and constitutional right.



American women from the east to the west coast are traveling from state to state in hopes of receiving the care they need and desire. Not only is this dangerous for their well-being and legal status, but it will also cause an influx of abortion-seeking-women in states where it is legal. Clinics may become overrun, unable to efficiently run business. However, trips to other states are both time and money consuming. Impoverished women or those without access to medically-verified products in states for abortion has been illegalized will begin resorting to more harmful methods of pregnancy termination. In addition, popularly known clinics like Planned Parenthood have become sites of pro-life protests and in some situations, have had to deal with the harming of both doctors and patients.

As we receive news alerts and see posts on our Instagram or TikTok feeds about the lack of abortion rights in other states, it is significant that we don't allow ourselves to be distanced from the issue simply because it isn't taking place in New York where it would directly affect us. Though decades have passed, the fight for reproductive rights in the United States will never be finished until abortion is legal in all 50 states, not just in a majority and not with overbearing parameters that continue to make it difficult.

## Map: US Abor





# SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACTS ON F

By Sari

"In 2021, a study conducted by Elizabeth Pleasants found that of the top 5 results for "abortion pill" on Google, only one result had information that was scientifically accurate."

Social Media can be a very effective forum for raising awareness for just causes like reproductive justice, as its broad reach to the social masses can influence the outcomes of unjust rulings or political agendas.

For instance, the Pro Choice system (present since the 1800s) uses social media to both form connections between individuals supporting Reproductive justice, and raise awareness. After the 6 week ban in Texas on abortion, the movement reused one of the most influential hashtags used to spread the message of abortion access online : #MyBodyMyChoice. The hashtag, originally introduced in the 1970s was and still is a representation of pro-choice movements and makes it

extremely efficient for more visibility and awareness. The message and use of the word spread when anti-abortion pills were introduced in March of 2020, and the overturning of Roe vs. Wade. By using social media, organizations and movements are able to effectively both unify existing members, and gain new ones by raising awareness. However, while this is the case, social media can also be used in spreading misinformation both about abortion access and reproductive justice.

Reproductive Justice is a subject to the most misinformation on social media. Many internet companies have been known to accept advertising money from groups that spread false information, and people who rely on the internet and social media are misguided when making decisions about reproductive health as a result The Center for Countering Digital Hate reported that from January 2020 to September 2021, Facebook alone accepted up to \$140,000 for 92 ads promoting "abortion pill reversal." Search engine results also create misleading information about abortion.

In 2021, a study conducted by Elizabeth Pleasants found that of the top 5



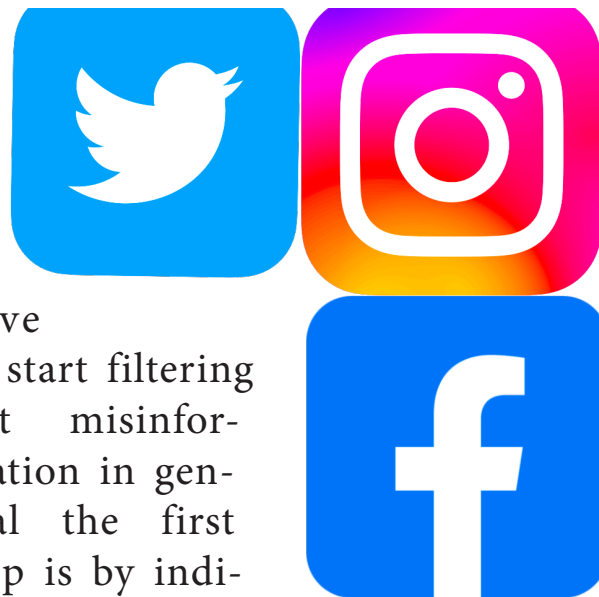
# REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE EDUCATION

na Shah

results for “abortion pill” on Google, only one result had information that was scientifically accurate, where three of the results were from anti-abortion groups spreading misinformation. Additionally, the same study found that more than half of the Google web pages on abortion had misinformation from anti-abortion groups that could change a person’s decision to have an abortion.

Since most major social media platforms do not have abortion-specific misinformation policies, This false information also has broader repercussions. Reproductive justice issues greatly influence voters hence the distribution of false information has a significant impact on their choices. Access to abortion was a key voting issue in the midterm elections. Misinformation on the internet could result in unsupported political beliefs that could impact the election of future leaders in the absence of background information and additional research.

This is why reproductive justice should be addressed in the health sections of classes to ensure that students have access to reliable information regarding abortion access. Social media companies and the internet in general



have to start filtering out misinformation in general the first step is by individually educating ourselves and raising awareness. Misinformation often spreads through sharing links or even word of mouth., Therefore, it's important to do proper research before spreading pieces of information that can be both sensitive and have a large impact on society. Social media can be an amazing resource to rally and support other women, and reproductive justice campaigns. However, we all need to make sure that the information we are getting is accurate so that we can make proper decisions when it comes to reproductive justice policy.

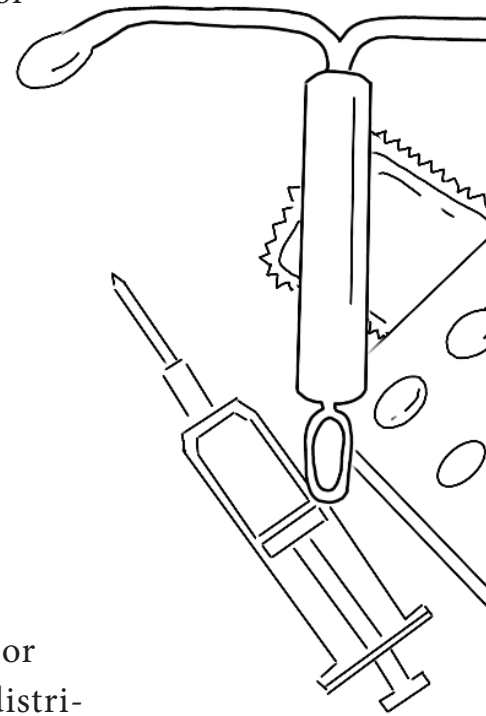
# ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTIVES

By Rani

While access to abortion and contraceptives falls under the realm of reproductive rights, abortion bans in a post-Roe world have revealed the dangers of merging the two. Since the 1950s, The Food and Drug Administration has approved a wide range of contraceptives such as male and female condoms, birth control pills, and IUDs. Some birth control opponents and far-right lawmakers have argued that certain forms of birth control are forms of abortion, referring to them as “abortifacients.” However, According to the American College of Obstetricians, although these contraceptives do not prevent fertilization, they are unlike abortion as they are only effective prior to implantation. Fertilization occurs when a female egg and male sperm join to form a zygote whereas pregnancy occurs when the fertilized egg implants in the uterus, a different process that occurs several days after fertilization. Therefore, contraceptives and abortion are distinct, both legally and medically.

Though conflating abortion and contraceptives might not be an issue in a world where birth control and abortion procedures are legal and accessible, with the reversal of Roe v. Wade, it has infringed on reproductive access nationwide. According to legal experts, the Supreme Court's decision to ban abortion could result in restricted access to certain contraceptives. "The states that are

trying to limit abortion from the moment of conception — not even from the moment of pregnancy, as the medical profession would define it — could well try to challenge Plan B, emergency contraception, potentially even IUDs," said Wendy Parmet, director of the Center for Health Policy and Law at Northeastern University. The fact that Plan B does not prevent fertilization but rather implantation causes some to associate this form of birth control with abortion. For example, House Bill 813 would redefine abortion to include contraception that does not prevent fertilization in the state of Louisiana. After the abortion ban in Missouri, a major hospital limited its distribution of emergency contraceptive methods in fear of breaking the law. While the Louisiana bill was eventually voted out and the state attorney general in Missouri clarified that the definition of abortion does not include contraceptives, these instances reflect how

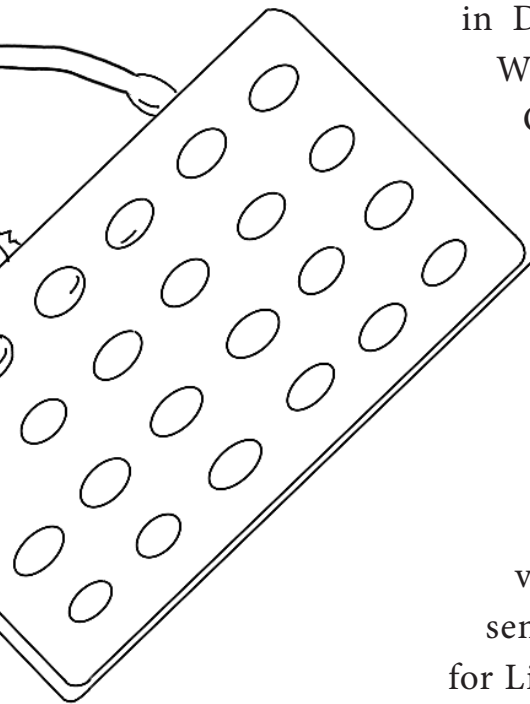


# IVES IN A POST-ROE WORLD

Ogden

limited access to abortion may result in limited access to contraceptives as well.

Not only do we see this ideology among state legislatures, but it also exists in the Supreme Court. Although abortion is no longer protected by the constitution, contraceptives continue to be a constitutional right. However, some Supreme Court Justices have argued against the constitutional right to contraceptives. For example, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas argued that the constitutional right to contraception should be revoked. In the dissent for the *Priests for Life* case, Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh referred to birth control as an "abortion inducing drug" which, according to the National Women's Health Network, "reflects the non-scientific rhetoric of anti-choice activists rather than the real way that contraceptive drugs and devices work."



When examining the relationship between contraceptives and abortion, the controversial debate emerges of whether access to contraceptives decreases or increases the abortion rate. Part of the anti-contraceptive argument especially amid conservative, Christian rhetoric is that access to contraceptive methods causes the abortion rate to rise. For example, this rhetoric is reflected in Dr. Janet Smith's argument, who is a professor of moral theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit). "Most abortions are the result of unwanted pregnancies, most unwanted pregnancies are the result of sexual relationships outside of marriage, and most sexual relationships outside of marriage are facilitated by the availability of contraception. To turn this 'progression' around: contraception leads to more extra-marital sexual intercourse, more extra-marital sexual intercourse leads to more unwanted pregnancies; more

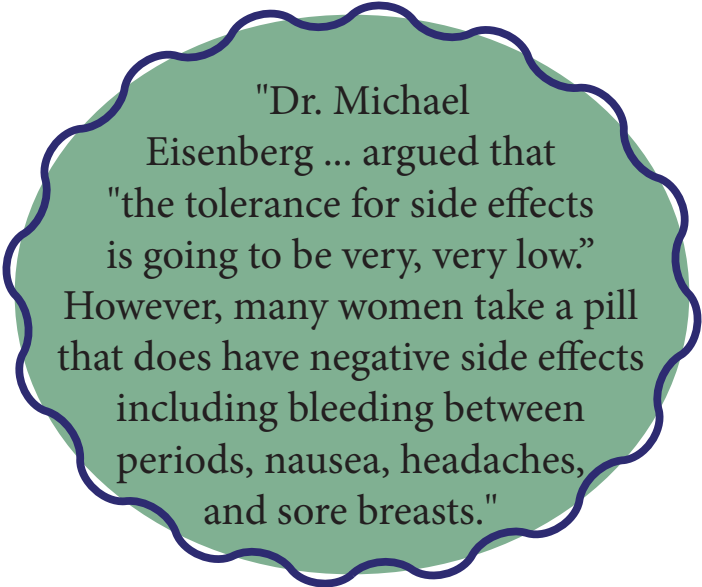
"Although abortion is no longer protected by the constitution, contraceptives continue to be a constitutional right. However, some Supreme Court Justices have argued against the constitutional right to contraceptives."

# ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION IN A POST-ROE WORLD

*continued*

unwanted pregnancies lead to more abortions,” she said. However, is this argument supported by evidence?

A study published by the peer-reviewed journal *The International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* found that, yes, in several countries including the United States the abortion rate did rise along with increased access to contraceptive methods, while in several countries the abortion rate decreased along with access to contraceptives. However, the study found reduced abortions in settings where fertility is constant. In addition, factors such as location and affordability affect access to contraception. Rural and remote areas may have access to fewer healthcare providers, and distance and transportation costs can pose additional barriers. For those without insurance or with lower incomes the cost of contraception, specifically prescription contraceptives like IUDs and birth control pills can pose significant obstacles. So although there might be nationwide increase in contraceptive access, this access may only reach certain communities. For example, a study done by Washington University in St. Louis, the contraceptive CHOICE project, recruited 9,256 women from 2007-2011 between the ages of 14-45 and found that providing free birth control to women



"Dr. Michael Eisenberg ... argued that "the tolerance for side effects is going to be very, very low." However, many women take a pill that does have negative side effects including bleeding between periods, nausea, headaches, and sore breasts."

reduced unplanned pregnancies and cut abortions 62-78 percent in comparison to the national rate. Therefore, when access to contraceptives is easy, de-stigmatized, and affordable, we see a decline in the need for induced abortions, contrary to the conservative rhetoric cited earlier. Finally, a lack of contraceptive methods may lead to extremely dangerous attempts to make contraceptives at home. For example, a BMC Health Services study found that limited access to contraception and safe abortion among adolescents increased dangerous methods such as the use of battery acid and crushed bottles.

Plan B, an “abortifacient,” as many pro life advocates call it, is a contraceptive method taken by people with uteruses. The responsibility of taking and accessing birth



control is placed on individual women, rather than shared responsibility between two partners. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that only 23.9 percent of men ages 15-44 used a condom every time they had sex over the month before the survey was taken, whereas 69% of women ages 15-44 never missed a pill over the same period of time. Similarly, as new birth control that immobilizes sperm is emerging as an option for men and is geared towards mostly healthy men, Dr. Michael Eisenberg, a urologist and director of the Male Reproductive Medicine and Surgery Program at Stanford Medicine argued that "the tolerance for side effects is going to be very, very low." However, many women take a pill that does have negative side effects

including bleeding between periods, nausea, headaches, and sore breasts. The study done by BMC Health Services found that girls faced more consequences such as being blamed for pregnancy and dealing with the effects of unsafe abortions when dealing with pregnancy. This pattern of limiting women and girls' access to both contraceptives and abortion, prevents women's right to control the course of their own lives and families, placing these decisions in the hands of the state instead. Therefore, it is not that we should rely on contraceptives, it is not that we should rely on abortion, but it is that we should allow these reproductive methods to work hand in hand with women having their right to reproductive care.



The US Supreme Court overturned Roe vs Wade on June 24, 2022, a shocking reversal of what was established precedent. This created a new context of our lives as Americans in the 2020s. It is truly jarring, then, to consider the context of HBO's new documentary, *The Janes*, which takes place in the 1960s and 1970s, during which a lack of abortion rights, not yet guaranteed until 1972, forced women into exploitative procedures and dangerous home-remedies. The film debuted in January, 2022, and was a story of triumph. However, the overturning of Roe vs Wade last year has fundamentally changed the experience of watching the documentary, making it far darker. Indeed, the documenta-

ry has already lived two distinct lives: one that is victorious and one that is dystopic, one that existed before June 24th, 2022, and one that exists after.

*The Janes* is a film that centers around a group of women who provided about 11,000 safe abortions to women in need from 1969 to 1973 in Chicago; throughout that period of time, pregnancy termination was illegal in most regions in the U.S. The documentary allows us to see an emotional and detailed story through a series of interviews with multiple women that were associated with and participated in the Jane Collective. Some women, such as Dorie Barren, were motivated to join the collective based on their own terrifying experience of receiving an underground abortion. Other Janes were aware that abortions were a necessity and that women did horrible things out of fear and desperation in order to obtain them.

"The documentary has already lived two distinct lives: one that is victorious and one that is dystopic, one that existed before June 24th, 2022, and one that exists after."





# FILM ANALYSIS

Crichton



The Jane Collective began when Heather Booth helped a friend receive an abortion and realized that it was extremely difficult, dangerous, and expensive. Word spread quickly that she could be a resource to help others solve the same problem. When she recognized that she would need more help, she put together a group of other activists in the women liberation movement which eventually formed the Jane Collective. This provided an easy way for women to access abortions: they would call a number and ask for "Jane," which functioned as their codename. At first, the Janes operated under the help of male doctors, but they realized, after the most-relied upon doctor lied about his credentials, that they could perform the abortions themselves. In the end, through their extraordinary efforts, they were able to create a full system of accessible and dependable abortions that would not put women in danger and that also eluded the

"At its heart, the documentary is a celebration of intelligent, persistent, and radical womanhood."

police, the courts, and even the mafia.

At its heart, the documentary is a celebration of intelligent, persistent, and radical womanhood. It is the story of castaway women who were rescued by other women that would not stand idly by and allow their sisters, mothers, friends, and strangers to be harmed by desperate measures. Yet, history will not let the film, or the Janes, rest on their laurels. The film's second life, which will outlast the first, is not a story of a triumph as much as it is a call to action. Ultimately, The Janes remind us that the fight for justice and equality is ongoing and that our freedoms are still under attack.

WINTER 2024

The Supreme Court's recent ruling which overturned *Roe v. Wade* has made it incredibly difficult for women to access safe abortions. Abortions are now almost completely illegal in 24 states except for a few exceptions. There are four main exceptions regarding abortion bans: if the fetus is unlikely to survive the pregnancy or is expected to die shortly after birth, if the woman will face severe health issues after the pregnancy, if the woman's life is in severe danger, or if a woman is pregnant due to rape. These few granted exceptions have resulted in limited success in regard to providing abortions to those eligible.

The exceptions for babies that are unlikely to survive the pregnancy or live long after the pregnancy are in place in Utah, Louisiana, Indiana, West Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Approximately 6,500 babies die between 20 weeks into pregnancy and the age of infancy. The majority of women who are pregnant

with these children want an abortion to prevent pain for the infant or to prevent themselves and their families from mourning. There are 17 states who have not made exceptions to these bans including states such as Texas and Montana.

If a woman is expected to face severe health issues after her pregnancy, 16 states have initiated an exception, allowing a woman to get an abortion. This exception is not present whatsoever in 8 states that have abortion bans in place. This leads to women being forced to endure severe medical issues if she lives in a state where abortions are not legal.

In the instance a pregnancy puts a woman's life in danger, every state besides Idaho, Tennessee, and North Dakota has implemented an exception in their ban. Idaho and North Dakota's bans are both currently being blocked by the judge. Tennessee's ban is facing ridicule for not granting this exception even by conservatives. For example, one of Tennessee's former representatives, Bob Ramsey, decided to vote against the ban as a result of it not including exceptions like this.

Out of the 24 states that have decided to ban abortion, only 5 states (Wyoming, Utah, Indiana, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Georgia) have made an exception for victims of rape and incest. It is estimated that currently, 3.4 million

"It is estimated that currently, 3.4 million women have become pregnant due to rape, and because of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, victims of rape in 19 states are unable to gain access to safe abortion."




# NS EXCEPTIONS

a Bhandari

women have become pregnant due to rape, and because of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, victims of rape in 19 states are unable to gain access to safe abortion. Additionally, in the states that give the victims of rape access to abortions, such as Mississippi, the victim is required to show a police report as proof that they have been raped. This serves as a critical obstacle for many women as they may feel unsafe or vulnerable in the face of coming out as victims of assault to law enforcement.

Women may have the right to these exceptions on paper, but in reality, most who qualify for abortion in their respective states are still unable to gain access to a safe abortion. This is because doctors have begun to turn women away since they are afraid they will face a variety of criminal penalties. Additionally, in the states that have banned abortions, it is incredibly hard or simply impossible to find an abortion clinic. If the state has banned abortion there are usually no abortion clinics in that state because if women can not legally have an abortion, abortion clinics will not have enough customers to be able to continue to run. This causes women to travel to another state if they are financially capable or rely on unsafe pills. Since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, it is estimated that



"The exceptions in abortion bans are rarely able to help women, and experts say that they exist solely to prevent the ban from appearing unreasonable."

thousands of women have qualified for these exceptions but very few instances of them being used have been reported. This is because it is incredibly challenging for women to prove that the law does give them the right to an abortion. There have been zero abortions in Louisiana due to birth defects and only two in Mississippi because of rape and incest. The exceptions in abortion bans are rarely able to help women, and experts say that they exist solely to prevent the ban from appearing unreasonable. This makes the laws more or less useless because they are ineffective in providing help to women.

To conclude, the exceptions in the abortion bans have the potential to help a portion of women who are having difficulty gaining access to a safe abortion, though currently, they have been unsuccessful in providing help to women.

# We Rise

## *A Poem by Inaugural Poet Amanda Gorman*

Today, everyone's eyes  
Are on us as we rise.  
Today is the day women  
Are paving the way,  
Speaking our truth to power.  
In this hour, it is our duty  
to find the brave beauty  
In rooting for other women  
So they too know we are not victims,  
We are victors, the greatest predictors  
of progress. We press for change,  
A new dawn drawn into the open  
By women whose silence is broken.  
We push on and act on  
Our responsibility to bring visibility  
To the most vulnerable:  
To bring freedom to those who didn't have a choice,  
To bring volume to those who are using their voice.  
We clear a woman's way,  
We don't fear the day  
She steps into the light  
Because we are with her  
Every step of the fight.  
There's a lot at stake, but making  
A difference always takes great courage.  
So we encourage women who dare to stare  
Fear square in its face,  
Women who've always shown  
That when one woman stands up  
She is never alone.  
We know that when she steps up to right a wrong,  
She will fight to bring others along  
To the network, into the conversation,  
Working together to change communities  
And nations for generations, our world  
Made all the stronger the longer  
Women are able to sit at the table.  
It is her strength, her story, and her spirit  
Which inspires other vital voices  
to speak up when they hear it.  
So let it be said that light will be shed  
When our world is led by leaders ahead  
of the headlines, the voices  
Who are first on the frontline,  
These women who stand up,  
knowing the wind  
Not by where it is, but where it is blowing,  
Leading worlds not by how society is  
But where change is going.  
We all leap forward when one woman tries,  
When she defies with her rallying cries.

Here lies, but does not rest, the best  
Of tested women who call us all to rise,  
Speaking the truth in this finest hour:  
That to their own power,  
every single woman is entitled.  
But it's how they empower others  
That makes women's voices so vital.

<https://www.best-poems.net/amanda-gorman/we-rise.html>

# Creation Myths

## *A Poem by Naomi Gelfer*

### Section I: Beginning Takes Strength

I was born rooted and the doctors believed they cut / me off / loose / alone.  
This world greeted us with a knife / and / bright lights / and / blank stares.  
Our first encounter with feeling was the blade / boring into that through which we siphoned life.  
Fooled us into believing we were born wounded.

when I was created  
did I think the world of my mother was the universe?  
now I exist, trembling fingers and numb toes in the multiverse

I still escape deep into the arms of my mother

soul where I began.

yet bite my tongue when I speak to her.  
And it bleeds.  
Who will patch me up now?

I am the culmination of the destruction of her creation / her blood dries with me:

She carried me as I carry forth my father's name and the name of the fathers that came before.  
I am of her/I am by her/am I for her?

I will carry my husband's children.  
We are vessels / my mother and I.  
We are the universe / we are creation and destruction.  
Something of us will be born again.

### Section II: Beginning Again Takes Courage

I am a woman  
my hair grows long  
my eyes they catch  
upon sun's summer sorrow song  
The one that plays  
on damp vines  
dripping dew droplets  
in perfect time  
I exercise my heart  
it is a muscle  
in my shattered mirror  
i see a puzzle  
I: mosaic of mothers-fore  
of confessions dormant in kitchen drawers  
of the earrings we've all worn  
of the pictures we've all torn.  
I buzz with curiosity  
a gross yearning to see  
some glorious reflection of me.  
I have some clues  
i have a mother  
and a critic in a brother.  
I must stop waiting for a cue  
There is so much I have yet to do.

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