



FREEDOM IS FOR
EVERYBODY

To: Interested Parties

From: NARAL Pro-Choice America Research Team

Date: June 27, 2022

Memo: Anti-Choice Movement Works Overtime to Downplay, Distract, and Deflect After U.S. Supreme Court Overturns *Roe v. Wade*

Executive Summary

On Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court released its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, officially [overturning landmark abortion rights cases](#) *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. The devastating decision overturns nearly 50 years of Supreme Court precedent, and roughly half of the states in the country are at risk of banning abortion. This includes 13 states with "trigger bans" in place, many of which [moved immediately](#) to ban abortion after the decision was released. Millions of people are confused and terrified about what this decision means for their lives, creating a moment ripe for the spread of mis- and disinformation about the legality, necessity, and medical reality of abortion care.

Anti-choice activists and politicians are already capitalizing on this confusion and working to **downplay, deflect, and distract** attention from the realities of this extreme decision and its cruel impacts. In addition to verifying information about abortion care before sharing it with audiences, progressive allies must mobilize to combat misleading narratives and inoculate against disinformation. We need to communicate clearly with audiences about **the stakes of this moment, the motivations of those who brought us here, and the harm that real people will experience as a result of this decision.**

Anti-Choice Strategy #1: Downplay the Extremity of the Supreme Court's Decision

Anti-choice politicians and groups immediately and [inaccurately framed](#) the radical decision as allowing the "will of the people" on abortion policy, ignoring the fact that the decision directly contradicts the values of the vast majority of people who support the legal right to abortion. Falsehoods about anti-choice groups working for "state's rights" and "compromise" on abortion policy are thinly-veiled attempts to obfuscate the movement's true agenda: a total ban on abortion care across the United States, a goal [explicitly articulated](#) by former Vice President Mike Pence in response to the decision.

In order to soften their radical agenda, anti-choice groups also used the decision as an opportunity to push [disinformation](#) that [defies medical consensus](#) and [falsely claim](#) that the decision aligns with "modern science." They continued to make intentionally [inflammatory and inaccurate claims](#) about "abortion up to the moment of birth" to falsely paint reproductive freedom advocates as "extreme." The real extremists are the MAGA Republicans who acted in defiance of the 8 in 10 Americans who support the legal right to abortion and took away our right to control our own bodies and futures.



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Anti-Choice Strategy #2: Fearmonger About “Violence” to Distract and Victimize Themselves

To bolster efforts to portray advocates for reproductive freedom as “extreme,” immediately following the leaked draft opinion in May, anti-choice activists and politicians began [seeding a narrative](#) that pro-choice activists would pursue violence to intimidate the Court and the anti-choice movement. They continued this strategy following the release of the official decision, working to [falsely frame](#) peaceful mass mobilizations as “riots” and [erroneously equating](#) them to the January 6 insurrection.

Those protesting this erosion of abortion rights and access are exercising their freedom of speech and making it clear that the anti-choice movement does not have broad support. Reproductive freedom advocates have clearly stated [our commitment to nonviolent action](#)—claims to the contrary must be called out as transparent attempts to undermine and distract from protests and other public opposition to the Supreme Court’s attack on reproductive freedom.

Anti-Choice Strategy #3: Deflect Attention From the Realities of Their Agenda

The anti-choice movement has long worked to falsely portray its regressive agenda as being “pro-woman,” a tactic they doubled down on following the decision’s release. Activists [falsely proclaimed](#) the decision was “a win for women,” and [promoted fake health centers](#) (FHCs) as “resources” for pregnant people in a post-Roe world. Furthermore, anti-choice activists [falsely claimed](#) bans on abortion would have no impact on access to medical treatment for miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, and treatment to save a pregnant person’s life, glossing over how [anti-choice policies function in practice](#).

Beyond putting the fundamental right to decide if, when, and how to start or grow a family for women and pregnant people at risk in over half the states in our country, anti-choice groups are already [promoting model legislation](#) that would criminalize abortion providers and anyone who “aids and abets” someone seeking abortion care. Regardless of what anti-choice activists want the public to believe, [criminalization won’t stop there](#). Dozens of people have [already been criminalized](#) based on anti-choice ideology, and anti-choice laws in a post-Roe landscape will put even more people at risk of being surveilled, interrogated, and incarcerated for suspicion of abortion and other pregnancy outcomes.

Bottom Line: The Anti-Choice, Anti-Freedom Movement Won’t Stop At Ending Roe

The anti-choice movement scored a major victory at the expense of freedom and equality for people across the country when the Court overturned Roe, but their agenda won’t stop there. As indicated by Justice Thomas’ [concurring opinion](#), other core rights, including marriage equality and access to contraception, are also at risk.

The anti-choice movement is a [core player in attacks on democracy](#) intended to advance white, Christian patriarchy in the United States. The end of Roe will allow anti-choice activists and politicians to be even more blatant in their attacks on reproductive freedom, LGBTQ equality, and racial justice. We cannot allow them to falsely portray themselves as benevolent, compassionate, and only concerned with attacking abortion—this is one devastating step forward for their long-term agenda to control people’s decisions and prevent us from having the freedom to determine our lives and futures.