Memo: Anti-Choice Movement Pushes False Narratives About “Protecting Women”
Post-Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization

With the introduction of Senator Lindsey Graham’s (R-SC) national abortion ban, the anti-choice movement has yet again rebranded its attacks on abortion access as efforts to “protect women.” However, the harm that abortion bans cause women and pregnant people is well documented, and there have been many cases of these dangers playing out since the Dobbs decision in June.

The anti-choice movement co-opts language around "women's rights“ to justify its extremism and distract from its ultimate aim of white supremacist, patriarchal control. While anti-choice activists and politicians work to downplay the harms abortion bans cause, we must center the impact of bans on real people, call out the anti-choice movement’s rampant transphobia and homophobia, and expose their motives and radical agenda.

Using Fake Feminism to Validate Restrictions on Abortion Care
The anti-choice movement has long operated under the guise of being “pro-woman” to promote its misogynistic, regressive agenda. Who could forget anti-choice activists falsely asserting that the overturning of Roe v. Wade was a “win” for women and would ultimately “serve” them? The anti-choice movement continues to misleadingly argue that they are the “real allies” to women and the “true feminists” in the conversation around reproductive freedom.

In order to legitimize its inaccurate and inflammatory claims that the anti-choice movement “empowers” women, anti-choice activists—such as Abby Johnson and March for Life—allege to defend women against a “false choice” they face between parenthood and a career. They baselessly claim to protect women from the reproductive freedom movement’s work to “turn women against” motherhood and from the “harms” of abortion access. This fake feminism deliberately distracts from how abortion bans hurt women and pregnant people and deny them the ability to decide if, when, and how to start or grow a family.

The anti-choice movement’s continued elevation of medical disinformation about abortion care—especially that it is “never necessary,” more “dangerous” than childbirth,” and “not healthcare”—further underscores the hypocrisy of its “pro-woman” narrative. Using medically inaccurate claims to scare, confuse, and manipulate people seeking care is cruel. It diminishes a pregnant person’s decision-making and disregards their health and well-being. Yet anti-choice activists and politicians are leaning into this manipulative narrative to argue that the proposed national abortion ban “protects women” and attempt to garner support.

Promoting Fake Health Centers as their Post-Roe Solution to “Supporting Women”
Rather than calling to strengthen current social safety nets and promoting policies that directly support pregnant people and families, anti-choice activists and politicians cite...
so-called “alternatives to abortion” programs as evidence that they will “support” pregnant people who are denied abortion care in a post-Roe world. Millions of public dollars have been funneled into these anti-choice programs, many of which aren’t legitimate medical clinics, and are largely unregulated. On the rare chance that an audit occurs, fake health centers are found to use the funds to promote their anti-choice agenda. Moreover, many fake health centers deceptively market themselves as medical providers but are rarely run by licensed medical professionals, which allows them to evade privacy and ethical standards that protect patients.

Fake health clinics—sometimes referred to as “crisis pregnancy centers”—are the centerpiece of so-called “alternatives to abortion” programs despite their well-documented history of using deceptive messaging, and coercive tactics to manipulate people and dissuade them from accessing abortion care. These organizations fearmonger about abortion care by spreading disinformation, including promoting medically unsound practices such as so-called medication abortion “reversal.” Nevertheless, the anti-choice movement continues to make false claims that fake health centers provide “help” to pregnant people and “save babies.”

Using Transphobia and Gender Essentialism to Perpetuate the False Narrative of Being “Pro-Woman”

The anti-choice movement weaponizes transphobic and trans-exclusionary language in its abortion messaging to position itself as the “protector” of (cisgender) women and promote regressive views of gender and reproductive freedom. In tandem with other right-wing actors, the anti-choice movement weaponizes discourse about inclusive language as a wedge issue to stoke division and attack both abortion access and gender-affirming care.

In the wake of Dobbs, the anti-choice movement has lashed out with increasing transphobia in an attempt to distract and divide the reproductive freedom majority. They promote out-of-touch stereotypes that assume women should want to have children and ideologically-motivated, transphobic views around gender to validate limiting reproductive care. They push the false narratives that motherhood is synonymous with womanhood and that gender inclusivity threatens and “insults” womanhood to hide their discriminatory and dangerous ideas under a thin veil of “women’s rights.” They focus on the “dangers” of inclusive language rather than face the reality—that attacks on abortion harm everybody.

Using Fake Feminism to Mask True Harm

The anti-choice movement continues to amplify false and disingenuous claims about being “pro-woman” when in reality their attacks on reproductive freedom cause real-life harm for women and all pregnant people. Its claims to offer “support” and “protection” are intended to mask the true harms of its agenda.