

US Supreme Court overturns Roe v Wade

Right to Life News 24th June 2022

The US Supreme Court has struck down the Roe v Wade decision that previously legalised abortion across the United States in 1973. The 6-3 decision in Dobbs v.s. Jackson Women's Health Organization followed the early May leak of a draft opinion indicating that the Justices would overturn Roe v Wade.

Abortion law in the US is principally governed by both the 1973 Roe v Wade decision and the 1992 Planned Parenthood vs Casey decision, which created a right to abortion out of the right to privacy. Both have been overturned by the decision released today. Prominent Telegraph journalist Tim Stanley welcomed the decision on Twitter: "I never imagined I would see it undone, though Roe v Wade was patently flawed. Abortion has not been banned; it's been handed back to the states, where it's now the business of advocates to argue for or against & citizens to vote their conscience. It's the beginning of a thousand battles". "I'll take any political loss over a win for life. Sack me, mock me, marginalise me, whatever, I absolutely don't care because it's the one solid battle I'll go over the top for. It's the litmus test for who we are". "I know the prochoicers think we're evil, but, for me, it comes down to this: I don't believe anyone is unwanted. That equality we all pay lip service to, it means loving totally all people, whatever their race or abilities or sexuality or age right down to the clump of cells that makes you *you*. The moment we give ourselves the power to say, "this person, they live, that person they don't", we're on the road to Hell. Everyone deserves a shot. That's what it says in the Declaration – "equal, inalienable rights, life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness"."

Decisions on abortion will be returned to individual states

Today's decision will return the matter of abortion legislation to individual states. This will not introduce a total ban on abortion throughout the United States, instead, individual states would decide on their own abortion legislation. In practice, this would likely result in liberal States, such as New York, having very permissive abortion laws, and a number of conservative States having abortion laws that would include full protections for unborn children. According to pro-abortion think tank Guttmacher Institute, 16 states and the District of Columbia have laws that explicitly protect the "right" to abortion to varying degrees, meaning abortion would likely continue to be available in these states. The pro-abortion think tank, which was previously the research arm of abortion provider Planned Parenthood, also indicates that 26 states are "certain or likely" to introduce restrictions that would protect unborn children from abortion. Nine states have pre-Roe restrictions on abortion that could potentially be enforced if the ruling is overturned, and 13 states have what abortion advocates have labelled as "trigger bans" in place, meaning that abortion restrictions would be in place in these states if Roe was overturned. For the remaining states, there would soon likely be new legislation proposed by both pro-abortion and pro-life advocates to change abortion legislation in each of these individual states. Which legislation is passed would depend on the make-up of each state's legislature and public demand for changes in legislation from people in that State.

Women in the US support significant restrictions on abortion

Recent polling shows that 69% of women in the United States believe that there should be significant restrictions on abortion. The polling found that 69% of women believe that abortion should be available, at most, during the first three months of pregnancy, allowed only in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother, or never permitted. The polling showed that 37% of women believed that abortion should only be legally permitted in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother. A further 21% of women believed that abortion should not be legal after the third month of pregnancy. The polling also found that a majority of those who call themselves pro-choice (52%) believe that abortion should be available, at most, during the first three months of pregnancy, allowed only in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother, or never permitted. In addition to this, 82% of American women think that it is possible to have laws that protect both the health and well-being of a woman and the life of her unborn child. 76% of people who consider themselves pro-choice and 79% of people who identify as Democrats agree.

Spokesperson for Right To Life UK, Catherine Robinson said: “Today’s decision sees the overturning of an unjust law that has led to the deaths of over 62 million babies since 1973”. “This decision removes the imposition of an extreme abortion law across the United States. It returns policy decisions around abortion to the states where they can be decided by the democratic process”

“This decision was based on whether the law in Mississippi would be upheld. That state chose to protect unborn children from 15 weeks gestation, which is consistent with what the majority of countries in the EU already do. In fact, the median time limit for abortion on demand or on broad social grounds among EU countries is 12 weeks gestation. As a result of today’s decision, many US states will likely align themselves more closely with the European approach to gestational time limits on abortion”.

“The pro-life movement in the US will now be working to build consensus for the strongest protections possible for unborn children and women in every legislature. Alongside this, they will continue their existing work to support pregnant women and children in need. There are thousands of pro-life pregnancy centres and maternity homes across the United States. The pro-life movement in the United States will continue to grow to meet the needs of these women and their families”.

“Importantly, this law change does not actually ban abortion or prevent anyone from having an abortion. Rather, it makes abortion law a matter for states to decide. Some states will allow abortion without restriction and others will likely provide robust legal protection for unborn children throughout pregnancy”.

Last year, abortion campaigners brought forward an amendment to the UK Government’s flagship Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that would have introduced abortion on demand, for any reason, up to birth (including sex-selective abortion).

Thanks to the support from people like you, this amendment did not go to a vote and pass, but we expect the abortion lobby to make another attempt to introduce this extreme abortion law change shortly.

This would be the single biggest change to abortion legislation since 1967 and would leave England and Wales with one of the most extreme abortion laws in the world.

Please sign the petition to Boris Johnson, asking him to ensure that his Government does everything in its power to stop the introduction of abortion up to birth.

<https://righttolife.org.uk/signthepetitiontoboris> - copy and paste into your browser as hyperlink does not work in a pdf (Adobe format) article

FURTHER ARTICLE by Lord David Alton follows:

Reversing a tragic half century of lost lives

By Lord David Alton in “The Critic”. 4th July 2022

The US supreme court decision is a victory for decency and democracy

By a margin of six to three, the United States Supreme Court has voted to overturn the nearly 50 years old ruling which imposed abortion laws across the United States.

Since the *Roe v Wade* ruling the USA has been in a small club of nations, including China and North Korea, that allows abortion on demand after 20-weeks in pregnancy. Tragically, the UK also allows abortion on demand — for any reason — to 24 weeks, double the median among our European neighbours.

Allowing abortions to take place up until a very late gestation has long been unpopular. Years ago I challenged the upper time limits in Parliament, through a Private Members Bill. Although it was talked out by opponents it secured big majorities in parliamentary votes and in public opinion polls.

Likewise, in America, Gallup polls have repeatedly found that most Americans do not support abortion on demand after the first 12 weeks, and a recent poll found that 69 per cent of American women believe that there should be significant restrictions on abortion. This matters, because what the June 24th Supreme Court ruling does is return power to the people to decide what time limit — if any — should be enforced.

The Supreme Court has removed the imposition of a federally mandated abortion law and returned decisions around abortion to the states where they can be decided by the democratic process. The ruling doesn't make abortion illegal it just gives power to take the decision back to locally accountable representatives. Returning policy decisions on such a literal matter of life or death to the democratic system is something that all who cherish liberty should welcome.

Some states will allow abortion up to birth without restriction, and others will likely align themselves more closely with the European approach to gestational time limits on abortion. Now that *Roe v Wade* has been overturned it is reported that 22 states are said to be ready to introduce restrictions that will protect unborn children from abortion. This will be done via so-called trigger laws, legislation already on the books in anticipation of the Supreme Court's decision. Indeed, Missouri has already announced such a move, and others will doubtless follow.

Some, wrongly, say the ruling violates human rights. (Those same people, incidentally, far too rarely talk about the scale of the forced abortions taking place in China.) But abortion is not, and has never been, deemed a human right in any international law. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the other hand, does guarantee the right to life itself. All the other rights are worthless without that paramount right to life and are contingent on it.

Then there are those who persist in talking about abortion in abstract terms — they talk about choice and rights. But to what has this led? The most recent figures showed that around 1 in 5 pregnancies in America ended in abortion in 2020. This equates to more than 930,000 abortions in a single year — roughly the same number of people who live in the greater Liverpool area. Meanwhile in the UK, there is an abortion performed every three minutes, and many are repeat abortions.

Medical science and knowledge of the development of the child in the womb has dramatically improved since the 1973 *Roe v Wade* Judgement.

We now live in a world where a child's baby album begins with an ultrasound photo of that child developing in the womb. We know that baby's heartbeat is present from 22 days after fertilisation; spontaneous movement begins from 6-7 weeks; at 8 weeks the baby has fingers, toes, a working digestive system and 90 per cent of his or her body parts have formed; at 10 weeks the baby's heart has already beat over 10 million times. To not even consider reviewing abortion laws in light of this would be perverse, especially when those laws are so out of sync with much of the rest of the world. Unsurprisingly, the state which brought the challenge case to the Supreme Court — Mississippi — has chosen to limit abortion after 15 weeks.

It often feels like there is little we can learn from American politics, but perhaps, in this one area if no others, there is a lesson about how we don't have to continue to accept extreme abortion laws which are both cruel and out of date. A baby with a disability — everything from cleft palate to Down Syndrome — can be aborted up to and even during birth. Not just barbaric, this is eugenics too.

In the UK laws still permit abortion on demand at 24 weeks, even though medical advances show that unborn babies can survive at 21 and 22 weeks. Ministers insist abortion by sex is illegal and “found no evidence” it occurs, even though there is ample evidence that it does take place. There is a clear disconnect between UK public opinion, where 70 per cent of women think abortion time limits should be reduced, and much of the political establishment which pretends this issue is long settled.

Since 1967, almost 10 million unborn lives have been lost in the UK. Perhaps Americans of the future will look back on the half-century or so when over 62 million unborn babies were aborted and wonder why and how it took so long to change this tragic decision. Hopefully, in time, the UK will follow suit and change laws which have needlessly taken so many unborn lives.
