

Abortion Rights

Deciding whether to have a child is a fundamental, life-changing, and completely personal decision. It involves medical concerns; it can impact career prospects for both the mother and the father; it can impact the financial and emotional viability of the whole family unit. The specific situations that result in a need for an abortion are as broad-ranging and frequently heart-rending as any topic in our shared humanity. This has been made flagrantly obvious in the horror stories that have emerged just in the short time since the Dobbs decision overturned *Roe v Wade* -- the 10-year-old rape victim and the woman found to be carrying a fetus with a serious cranial abnormality, who were denied abortion care, to name just two examples. Any nurse or doctor who remembers the pre-Roe era can testify that these stories will be commonplace wherever women's rights are not respected. Furthermore, it isn't just outlying cases that are a problem. Ordinary medical care for miscarriages, and for other medical conditions which are treated with the same drugs used in abortion care, is being impacted by the extremists' determination to criminalize providers. A standard which injects a lawyer into the decision about how to treat a woman at risk of a life-threatening sepsis, and threatens her doctor with prison if that decision is second-guessed by third parties with political agendas, is absurd and unworkable.

It is also notable that while Illinois has protections for women's right to choose enshrined in state law, Republicans are already making plans for a nation-wide abortion ban which would override those protections, the next time they have control of both Congress and the Presidency. Our only recourse to prevent that is to vote out politicians with that agenda at every level, until they must take note of the fact that the majority of Americans do not agree with their extreme positions.

The Democratic Party platform, like a strong majority of Americans, holds that the complex decision to start or continue a pregnancy should never be subject to a government-mandated ban, at either the federal or state level. Abortion and contraception are medical services that should be safe, legal, and obtainable anywhere in this country. There is a fundamental right to individual self-determination that underlies our Constitution, and it is surely self-evident that women cannot freely exercise that right without the unfettered ability to access medical control of pregnancy.