



## **PHM Statement on Reproductive Rights & Safe and Legal Abortion in the United States**

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We, the members of the People's Health Movement (PHM), a global network (<https://phmovement.org>) committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of Health for All including comprehensive primary health care, sexual and reproductive health care and addressing the social, environmental, and economic determinants of health, are compelled to draw attention to the imminent threat to abortion rights in the US. PHM strongly believes that universal access to safe, quality, legal abortion is a basic human right. We extend our solidarity and support to activists in the US working to prevent the Supreme Court from encroaching on this basic right to health, healthcare and reproductive justice.

A leaked draft majority opinion of the US Supreme Court, published by Politico, reveals that the Court is poised to strike down the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* as well as the 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* judgments that have guaranteed reproductive rights through abortion for decades. The rights protected by those rulings provided all people - especially women and young girls - with reproductive freedom through the choice to elect and abortion in the first trimester and limited rights in the second trimester. It ruled that the US Constitution protects a pregnant person's liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive or unreasonable government restriction over that person's body.

The current case centres around a regressive law passed in Mississippi which outlaws most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. Similar stringent anti-abortion legal restrictions have been seen in Oklahoma, Texas, Kentucky and other states. Many states with conservative, anti-rights populists have enacted "heartbeat" abortion bans that prohibit abortions once fetal heartbeat is detected, at approximately six weeks gestation, when most people are generally unaware of pregnancy, with no exemptions for rape or incest. If the *Roe v. Wade* judgment is overruled, state legislatures can ban abortion completely. Overturning *Roe v. Wade* will remove federal constitutional protection of reproductive rights, leaving it to the states to determine the extent of abortion access within their jurisdictions. Indeed, many states already have "trigger laws" in place which will ban abortion if this ruling is made by the Court. These laws are designed to attract political attention rather than to protect human rights.

Striking down *Roe vs Wade* judgement will have a detrimental impact globally, on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Millions of women and young girls particularly the marginalized, racialized, women of colour, Indigenous, poor, immigrant women, LGBTQ persons may lose access to safe and legal abortions - resulting in thousands of deaths due to 'backstreet' abortions. Those who cannot afford to seek services in jurisdictions that respect their rights and freedoms will be discriminated against.

*Roe v. Wade* has been instrumental in influencing courts across the world on recognition and respect for individual rights and freedoms. Any attempt to strike down this judgement has the potential to undermine important individual rights, be they bodily autonomy, privacy or reproductive rights.



Abortion continues to be criminalized in many countries, and feminists and other human rights activists have been fighting against extreme anti-abortion policies for many decades. There is a global movement demanding reproductive justice through safe and legal abortion. The legalization of abortion in Argentina, Mexico and Colombia, is an inspiring illustration of the long struggle and victory of feminists and health activists in Latin America. With that inspiration we join other feminist movements, SRH networks, health and human rights movements to demand strengthened legal protections safe, legal, affordable and quality abortions services for all people.

PHM calls on the US Supreme Court and legal experts to align themselves with basic human rights and freedoms by protecting reproductive justice through access to safe, legal abortion throughout the United States.

We further call upon the US President and Congress, state governors and legislatures, federal and state courts, human rights defenders and American civil society to stand against this reversal of human rights and encroachment on individual liberty and bodily autonomy, by enacting right-based legislation that fully protects abortion and all reproductive rights.