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Statement of Gloria Allred

Today the United States Supreme Court heard oral argument in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. In this case, Mississippi has banned abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy with only a few minor exceptions. Mississippi’s law is a direct challenge to the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade, in which the U.S. Supreme Court decided that a woman has a constitutional right to choose abortion and that a state may not ban abortion until the fetus is viable (which is generally considered to be at 25 or 26 weeks of pregnancy). In short, the state of Mississippi is seeking to overturn or reverse Roe v. Wade, before the fetus is viable, which is not permitted under Roe v. Wade.

I am one of millions of women who became pregnant before Roe v. Wade became the law of the land. My pregnancy resulted from a rape at gunpoint by a doctor in Mexico. At that time, abortion was a crime in many states, including but not limited to California. As a result, I, like many women, had to seek a back-alley abortion. I found someone who was not a medical doctor to do it. After the abortion, I developed a 106-degree fever from the infection and almost died. I had to be taken to the hospital and was packed in ice while I was hemorrhaging. That is why I am so committed to keeping abortion safe, legal, affordable, and available.

If the U.S. Supreme Court reverses *Roe v. Wade*, women will have difficult choices. They may have to risk their lives with back-alley abortions, or they may be forced against their will to take their pregnancy to term. Those who will be hurt the most, as U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor pointed out this morning, will be poor women and women of color. This is true, because as Justice Sotomayor stated, it is much riskier for a poor woman of color in Mississippi to give birth than to have a legal abortion¹.

The Justices did not make a decision in this case this morning, but I have many reasons to be concerned that the majority will decide either to reverse *Roe v. Wade*, or significantly gut it so that it is rendered meaningless. If that happens, it will trigger many states to criminalize abortion or restrict the right to choose legal abortion, so that access to it will be impossible for poor women, young women, women of color, and rural women.

This means that this decision is literally a life-changing and potentially life and death decision for women that will be made by the United States Supreme Court. I am not optimistic about their decision, but I am optimistic that pro-choice women and pro-choice men know what is at stake and that we will continue to fight for our rights in every state and not remain silent in the face of any decision

¹ “So, when does the life of a woman and putting her at risk enter the calculus? Meaning, right now, forcing women who are poor -- and that's 75 percent of the population and much higher percentage of those women in Mississippi who elect abortions before viability -- they are put at a tremendously greater risk of medical complications and ending their life, 14 times greater to give birth to a child full term, than it is to have an abortion before viability.”

that threatens to restrict or undermine our right to control our bodies and our lives.

I look forward to continuing to fight for our rights with Paxton Smith, who so bravely spoke out in support of a woman's right to choose legal abortion when she was high school valedictorian at her graduation in Texas in June of this year. In October 2021, she spoke out with me at the Women's March to Support Choice in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. Although she is young, she knows the importance of fighting for our rights, and I look forward to continuing our work together to preserve and vindicate our rights on this critical issue.

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