

House Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing
Impact of the Supreme Court's Dobbs Decision on Abortion Rights and Access Across the United States

Erin Hawley – Opening Remarks
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Good morning Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, and Members of the Committee. I'm Erin Hawley, Senior Appellate Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs* corrects a nearly fifty-year wrong—one that resulted in the death of over sixty million unborn children. *Roe v. Wade* was premised on egregious legal errors and its reversal is a tremendous victory for life and for the American people. *Roe* cheated us of our ability to promote good policy but *Dobbs* restores our opportunity to reaffirm motherhood, and in doing so, empower women.

Roe was terrible constitutional law. It invented—fabricated, really—a “right” to abortion from thin air and scholars [across the political spectrum](#) believed the case was wrongly decided. *Roe* took from the American people the right to protect unborn life, usurping the people's role in an exercise of “raw judicial power.” As a result of *Roe*, the U.S. has been an extreme outlier in abortion law, being one of only [a few](#) countries in the world—countries like China and North Korea—to allow elective abortion up until the moment before birth.

Tragically, *Roe* was as wrong about women as it was about the Constitution. Its seven male authors lamented that motherhood “forced” upon women “a bleak and distressful future.” But moms across the country know that's a demeaning and distorted picture of who we are and what we do. With *Dobbs*, Americans can begin to undo the damage of that devastating lie.

On behalf of Alliance Defending Freedom, I had the privilege of serving as counsel to Mississippi in *Dobbs*. My daughter was about six months old when I was asked to help with the case. It's not easy traveling with a baby, but my job allowed me to take her along, encouraged it, really, something we should see far more of in the workplace. Abigail was a tiny but tangible reminder of why *Dobbs* matter—because every child is unique and valuable.

While being a parent is often hard, and is immensely more difficult for a single parent without community support, moms across the country can attest that it is worth it. And for women who are reluctant to parent, there is also hope. At any given time, [one million](#) families are waiting to adopt. There is no such thing as an unwanted child.

In another lie to American women, *Roe* [told them](#) that their baby is merely “potential life.” But scientific evidence establishes that life begins at conception. At just six weeks unborn babies' [hearts begin to beat](#). At eight weeks, they have fingers and toes. And at 10 weeks their unique fingerprints begin to form. Yet without a hint of irony, pro-abortion activists [posit](#) that the reversal of *Roe* “treats women as objects, as less than full human beings.” However, it is

abortion that treats babies, including *female* babies, as mere objects, even while science establishes that babies are both fully alive and fully human, no matter how tiny they are.

The truth is *Roe* was not the pro-woman opinion that some imagine. In a patriarchal passage the pro-abortion left would rather forget, [Roe gave](#) to a woman's *doctor* the authority to choose abortion. As the late-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg [noted](#) *Roe* was "physician-centered," focusing on "a doctor's freedom to practice his profession as he thinks best." She said, "The picture that I got from [*Roe*] was tall doctor and little woman needing . . . his advice and care."

Abortion is a horribly inadequate solution to the very real problems that some women face. It often results in greater risk of death or illness. Many women are unsure of their decision at the time and a majority go on to suffer [emotional and psychological pain](#). Additionally, surveys show that most women who choose abortion report that they would have chosen life if they had more support. Many companies are now eager to help pay for women to end their pregnancies but how many of them offer to pay for diapers or childcare or permit flexible work schedules?

Dobbs gives women a voice and a vote. It returns the profoundly moral question to the people. It presents an opportunity for America to restore a culture that values families, women, and motherhood. Thankfully, we're already seeing state and private entities step up to surround expecting moms with a caring community and provide families with diapers, car seats, clothing, housing, educational opportunities, job training, and medical, emotional, and post-abortive care.

It has been less than three weeks since *Dobbs*. We still have questions, but there's one thing we know for sure: a post-*Roe* America is a hopeful one—an America where we can recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every life and empower women by providing them with the resources they need to flourish through pregnancy and beyond.

Thank you.