

We Will Not Go Gently: Reflections on the Fall of Roe v. Wade

June 2022

I've seen a lot of "I have no words" posts this morning.

I get it. To many, this is shocking. It's hard to believe, hard to process, hard to understand this new reality. But let's be very clear. Abortion rights activists saw this coming.

In 1973, we saw this coming. After the hundreds of challenges to Roe since 1973 - we saw this coming. In 2016. We. Saw. This. Coming.

And I have many, many words.

If you don't believe me, ask the generations of women and pregnant people who have fought for abortion rights for 50 years. Ask my grandmother who volunteered for Planned Parenthood in the early 60's. I think I can hear her today. I think I can hear her rage all the way from heaven.

It doesn't make today any easier. Like many Americans, I am gutted. Angry. Sad. I feel incredible rage. As one OBGYN doctor in Kentucky put it, "I feel like someone that is close to me has died."

When Politico's reporting leaked the draft opinion in May, there was a small part of me that still believed. Even today, there was still a small part of me that believed. That wanted to believe our recent court appointees when they stated under oath that Roe was precedent. That wanted to believe that the will of the American people would somehow be a factor.

It's also been very clear for some time now that we cannot depend on the Supreme Court to protect abortion access. It seems like each political cycle we see a new challenge – none more than in the past 3 years. Starting with Mississippi, then Texas, then Kentucky, then Idaho, then Florida, then on, and on and on.

Shame on our politicians for not keeping their promises to codify Roe. Shame on our Presidents and Presidential candidates for using Roe as a campaign talking point and nothing more. If our true power in this democracy lies in our vote, then why have our elected officials neglected to codify a fundamental human right. Haven't we made it clear? I shouldn't have to refresh my social media feed to find out if my right to bodily autonomy remains intact.

When I was in High School, the main reason for my beliefs about abortion stemmed from my own fear of becoming pregnant. I wanted a choice. I wanted to be able to decide for myself whether I could carry a child at that stage of my life. At age 26, I still want that decision. Don't we all?

Today, my thoughts on abortion remain unchanged, but with a new intersectional lens. As a white woman, I will always, always be able to access abortion. I have the funds to travel, the resources for support. I have privilege. Many Americans do not.

Make no mistake that today's ruling will have a ripple effect across racial and economic lines. Black and brown women are disproportionately affected by abortion bans, and those in poverty stay in

poverty when they are forced to carry a child they cannot afford to raise. It's not about me. It's about the millions of women and pregnant people across America who will face the most hardship.

And so again, as abortion rights activists have been saying for 50 years, this issue is not about protecting the unborn. It's about control. It's about keeping women and pregnant people in their place. It's about keeping black and brown people from gaining social and economic mobility. It's about keeping the white minority in power.

So there are a lot of choices you can make today. You can rage and feel anger and scream and take up space if you want to. You can take some moments for yourself. You can turn on the news and listen to every single second. You can also turn it off. You can talk to friends and family to process your emotions. You can disconnect completely.

But be ready. Be ready to stand up. Be ready to act. Whether that means donating to an abortion fund, attending a rally, learning more about the abortion pill, supporting friends and family who have had abortions, or calling your legislator. Do it. Do it all, and then do it again.

Because this isn't over. Our most sacred precedents may be next.

I will not go gently. I hope you won't too.