



STATEMENT OF FEMINISTS IN STRUGGLE

October 2, 2021

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO SAFE, ACCESSIBLE ABORTION ON DEMAND

While our Afghani sisters face an uncertain future under Taliban rule, we women in the United States have our own Christian fundamentalist version of the Taliban with which to contend. The goals are the same – to keep women barefoot, pregnant and locked in our houses, under the unquestioned rule of our husbands, fathers, and brothers, enforced by the coercive combined power of fundamentalist religion and the state.

The U.S. fetus fetishists' latest monstrosity is the Texas anti-abortion law that prohibits all abortions after six weeks (before most women know they are pregnant) and that provides for vigilante enforcement, deputizing anyone in and out of Texas to seek \$10,000 in bounty, plus attorneys' fees against abortion providers, or anyone else assisting a woman in obtaining an abortion. By letting this law stand as part of its "shadow docket" (without benefit of full briefing or oral argument), the U.S. Supreme Court may have effectively overturned *Roe v Wade* or at the very least, signaled its intentions to do so.

Though this turn of events has frightening consequences for women in Texas and elsewhere around the country, for many women, abortion rights was already hanging by a thread or practically non-existent. Abortion has not been accessible to poor women on Medicaid since 1977 with the passage of the Hyde Amendment, a mere 4 years after the ruling. As predicted by radical women's liberationists who regarded *Roe* as an inadequate compromise, women's right to abortion has been whittled away little-by-little until what we are left with today is largely an empty legal right, unavailable to vast numbers of women living in this country. In the 1980s, [Marion Banzhaf of the Abortion Rights Movement](#) (A.R.M.) argued that feminists needed to take a stronger line than "pro-choice." She said, "Being pro-abortion means going on the offensive to answer the attack on abortion rights. Being pro-abortion means that the woman is more important than the potential life—the fetus. It really is quite simple. The pro-abortion movement puts the woman first."

The Biden administration and the Democrats in Congress are hardly blameless regarding the state of affairs brought about by the [Texas anti-abortion law](#). They could take effective action to protect women's right to abortion, yet so far have not done so. President Biden could instruct the archivist to register the [Equal Rights Amendment](#), already ratified by 38 States, into the U.S. Constitution tomorrow, thereby placing sex-based protections into the Constitution, which would strengthen the legal grounds for abortion rights. Instead, [the Biden Administration has fought feminists in court](#) who sought this very result, while feigning outrage at the Texas law's assault on women's "constitutional rights."

Additionally, the Biden Administration and Congressional Democrats could work with all deliberate speed for passage of the Women's Health Protection Act ([HR3755](#) and [S1975](#)), federal legislation first introduced in

2017, which would secure the right to provide and receive an abortion, free from medically unnecessary restrictions that single out abortion from other medical procedures. They could also act decisively to **re-configure the Supreme Court** so far-right justices no longer dominate, which should have been done before the Texas law took effect, if protecting the right to safe, legal abortion were a priority. Though the **Justice Department has filed its own suit against the Texas law**, this is far from sufficient to solve the crisis women face.

If we have studied our history, we know that women have never had our rights handed to us by men in power or by male-dominated institutions. Rather, we have fought tooth-and-nail for them, from winning suffrage, the right to manage our own financial affairs, civil rights laws against sex discrimination in the workplace, to achieving legal abortion. Much is yet to be won. We are therefore heartened that the **Women's March** and other mainstream women's groups called for actions in support of abortion rights on October 2 in cities across the country.

FIST is here today with our sisters to demand that not only Roe be upheld and the Texas law defeated, but that the **Equal Rights Amendment** be enshrined in the Constitution and that unimpeded access to abortion be guaranteed to all women everywhere in the country via passage of the Women's Health Protection Act.

To fight effectively against those who would strip women of our reproductive rights, we need at the same time to challenge the erasure of women as a sex through language and public policy. Gender identity can no longer be allowed to override or supplant sex. As the abortion issue should make clear, women's oppression is based on our biological sex, regardless of the degree to which we may conform to or reject a set of society-imposed stereotypes about how women are supposed to use make-up, dress, and behave. Women—adult human females—are half the human race. Only women—females of reproductive age—have the capacity to get pregnant and give birth. Only women need abortions. Control over our own reproductive capacities, sexuality, and labor is absolutely required for the liberation of women.

So, using terms like “pregnant people,” “chest feeders” and “menstruators,” rather than being inclusive, actually undermines the struggle for women's liberation by obscuring the source of our oppression and makes it more difficult to re-build our movement. It would be like refusing to recognize the racist nature of policing by rejecting the slogan “Black Lives Matter” in favor of “All Lives Matter,” as we've seen in the right wing backlash against the current wave of activism combating police brutality. Black people and their allies rightly struggle against such language.

Women and our allies should be similarly willing to stand up for strong, clear language that abortion is about the rights of women. It is time for women to fight back proudly as women for our sex-based right to control our own reproduction.

We demand a WOMAN'S right to abortion without apology or impediment!

IF YOU AGREE, PLEASE JOIN US! <https://feministstruggle.org/>

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL!