

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

### **Opening Statement of Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Hearing on “A State of Crisis: Examining the Urgent Need to Protect and Expand Abortion Rights and Access” September 30, 2021**

Today, I am once again convening the Committee on Oversight and Reform to sound the alarm on the grave threat to abortion rights and access in the United States.

**Nearly two years ago, I called my first hearing as Chairwoman of this Committee to examine draconian attempts by state governments, including the State of Missouri, to restrict access to abortion care. Since then, the threat to abortion rights has only become more dire.** Millions of Americans are now living in a state where they lack meaningful access to abortion care. The right to abortion is rendered meaningless without access.

**Most recently, Texas enacted Senate Bill 8, which bans abortion after just six weeks of pregnancy—before many people even know they are pregnant. This is tantamount to a total abortion ban. The law authorizes private citizens anywhere in the United States to sue anyone who assists a person getting an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy. And it creates a bounty system that can entitle plaintiffs to a \$10,000 reward.**

Lawsuits have already been filed by people hoping to cash in under this dangerous law. This chilling, far-reaching law turns private citizens into vigilantes who can assert control over other people’s bodies.

**If we do nothing, the consequences will not be limited to Texas.**

**The Supreme Court allowed this unprecedented, dangerous abortion ban to go into effect, and already medical facilities in surrounding states are inundated with calls from Texans in urgent need of abortion care. And other states hostile to abortion rights are following the blueprint of S.B. 8.**

In December, the Supreme Court will consider a 15-week abortion ban passed in Mississippi. This case—Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization—poses a direct threat to Roe v. Wade, making very real the possibility that the constitutional right to abortion will be overturned in the coming months.

**Let me be very clear: access to abortion is a freedom that is essential for Americans’ ability to control their own bodies and to decide their own future.**

Nearly 1 in 4 women in the United States will have an abortion in their lifetime.

**But with a hostile Supreme Court, extremist state governments are no longer chipping away at our constitutional rights—they are bulldozing right through them. We must take bold action to protect and expand abortion care rights and access.**

**Last week, the House passed Congresswoman Judy Chu’s Women’s Health Protection Act, which would establish a federally protected right to abortion care for every person in the United States—no matter where they live. I call on the Senate to meet this moment and immediately pass this critical bill.**

**But we cannot stop there. We must also pass Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s EACH Act, which would put an end to the harmful funding restrictions of the Hyde Amendment that for too long have pushed abortion care out of reach—particularly for people of color and people with less income.**

**We must ensure access to medication abortion, a process that involves just two types of pills that can be taken at home and are safer than some medications sold over the counter.** Despite the thoroughly documented safety and efficacy of medication abortion, there are still onerous, medically unnecessary restrictions on this type of care.

**Lastly, we must enact democracy reforms that will protect voting rights for all so that the government more accurately reflects the American people.** It is completely backwards that a majority of Americans support preserving abortion rights, while at the same time, more and more states are working to block them. We must change that.

**Today, we have the privilege of hearing directly from our congressional colleagues who are incredible leaders on issues of reproductive rights and access. Their personal experiences demonstrate why every person must be able to exercise their right to choose abortion, and I am grateful to them for coming forward to share their stories.**

We will also hear from a distinguished panel of patients, providers, advocates, and experts, including the feminist icon Gloria Steinem.

Now, I would like to recognize Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley for an opening statement. Congresswoman Pressley serves as Chair of the Abortion Rights and Access Task Force on the Pro-Choice Caucus, and she is one of Congress’s greatest champions for equitable abortion access and a kinder, less stigmatizing world for abortion care patients.

Ms. Pressley, you are now recognized for three minutes.

###

---

Contact: Nelly Decker, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181