

As North Carolina Council for Women members of diverse backgrounds and experiences from across the great state of North Carolina, we condemn the leaked draft version of the Supreme Court's majority opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson*. That draft opinion would overturn decades of precedent that has enabled women to make their own, private and deeply personal decisions, in consultation with their doctors, for themselves and their families. Overturning *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* would widen cracks in the very foundation of our democracy. If the draft majority opinion holds in the case's final decision, millions of women will lose the right to make decisions about the fate of our bodies, families, and futures.

Women with financial and social means have historically found ways to access the reproductive care they need, but many poor women, women of color, and indigenous women—women who are already marginalized and denied access to quality health care—will inevitably face impossible decisions between attempting to end their own pregnancies, sometimes through dangerous means, or being forced to carry pregnancies to term against their will. Situated in the context of historical medical racism and reproductive coercion, such as the forced sterilizations particularly of Black and native women, lesbian and gender-non-conforming women, and women with mental health challenges, this draft opinion sounds a grave alarm for the future of our daughters and society writ large. It is in this precarious context that we recommit ourselves to our mission to shine a light on the issues most impacting women and families across the state—chief among them, healthcare—and to advance in our thought leadership and advocacy recommendations that will enhance the health, rights, and wellness of all North Carolinians.

We are grateful for the leadership of Governor Roy Cooper, "[an island in the South](#)," in this fight, but we do not take for granted that the overturning of *Roe* would leave our rights vulnerable to the political winds. Let us remember that ours is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," and that the grand ideals of America democracy will only be achieved when *all* people are afforded the same rights to "*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*." We stand in solidarity with allies across the state, region, and country who are working to protect these ideals and the fundamental rights and freedoms of our citizens.

As the Council—whose mandate it is to advise state leaders and state agencies on the status of women within our borders—we urgently call on state and national leaders to affirm women's fundamental right to determine whether and when we are physically, emotionally, and financially prepared to give birth.