



Wisconsin State Conference of Branches

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PRESS STATEMENT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WISCONSIN NAACP CALLS SUPREME COURT DECISION “A FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY”: A LOUD AND CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

Thurgood Marshall, who served on the court from 1967 to 1991, is almost exclusively remembered for his pathbreaking work as a civil rights lawyer — especially arguing before the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*. But after becoming a Supreme Court justice, he focused on securing equality under the law in numerous areas. In fact, he wrote a crucial opinion in a case on gender equality that offers an alternative rationale for abortion rights at a time when the feminist legal movement needs all the help it can get to restore this fundamental right.

He played an integral role in the right to abortion from the earliest stages including convincing Justice Harry Blackmun, who wrote the majority decision in *Roe v. Wade*, to extend the ruling’s protection to include the second trimester of pregnancy, a move that especially benefited poor women whose access to health care was often delayed. A few years later, Marshall was on the losing side of *Maher v. Roe*, a case about the constitutionality of using Medicaid to fund abortions. In his scathing dissent, he attacked the “ethical bankruptcy” of the decision, emphasizing that, “The enactments challenged here brutally coerce poor women to bear children whom society will scorn every day of their lives.”

The Supreme Court officially overturned *Roe v. Wade*. An entire generation of women have now lost the freedom to make a decision about their own bodies. Now, after almost 50 years as the law of the land, our fundamental right of choice has been ripped away.

“The Supreme Court’s decision marks a significant regression of our country,” said NAACP General Counsel Janette McCarthy Wallace. “As a legal professional, I am horrified by this decision. As a Black woman, I am outraged to my core. The deciding Justices have ignored fundamental civil rights guaranteed by our Constitution and years of judicial precedent to advance a politically partisan agenda. There is no denying the fact that this is a direct attack on all women, and Black women stand to be disproportionately impacted by the court's egregious assault on basic human rights. We must all stand up to have our voices heard in order to protect our nation from the further degradation of civil rights protections we have worked so hard to secure.”

Most Americans believe the decision to have a child is a private one and that decision should remain between a patient and their doctors. Our country was founded on a principal of freedom and this decision breaks that promise to millions of Americans who will no longer be guaranteed the right to decide.

“It is evidently clear at this time that the future of our democracy hangs in the balance. This Supreme Court is turning back the clock to a dangerous era where basic constitutional rights only exist for a select few. They've stripped away our right to vote, and now women have lost their right to their own body. What's next?” said Portia White, Vice President of Policy and Legislative Affairs. “We cannot allow our future to rest in the hands of those determined to crush every bit of it. We need to fight back. Just this week, the NAACP and Vote.org formed an alliance to register and mobilize voters in what will be the most critical midterm election America has ever faced. If you're not registered to vote, or know someone who isn't, now is the moment. This is no time for anyone to sit on the sidelines.”



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In Wisconsin:

- Governor Tony Evers called a special session to repeal the state's current 173-year-old law, which had been dormant for decades. Republicans, who control both chambers of the Wisconsin Legislature, gaveled in and out of that session within seconds. He stands behind the filing of a lawsuit by the Attorney General.
- Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm joined more than 80 other prosecutors around the country in a joint statement committing to not criminalize abortion in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court overturning its landmark 1973 ruling *Roe v. Wade*. The statement from the group Fair and Just Prosecution said: "Criminalizing and prosecuting individuals who seek or provide abortion care makes a mockery of justice; prosecutors should not be part of that."
- Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne stated "There are plenty of archaic laws on the books that represent the values of days past. I have every intention of utilizing the power Dane County voters entrusted in me and will use my discretion to prosecute only those crimes that keep our community safe and represent our collective values. If the voters want a district attorney who prosecutes women for seeking an abortion or licensed providers who are acting in the best interest of their patients, they will need to elect someone else.

The harm and needless tragedies that flow directly from abortion bans will target and disadvantage people of color and low-income individuals. The Wisconsin State Conference is duty-bound to answer the call in Wisconsin. We will not remain silent. We will fight for individual rights in the courts and at the ballot box. A ban on abortion and restrictions on access to abortion will be before our Republican led legislature. We must protect our right to reproductive freedoms and hold them accountable. Most Americans believe this an assault on our fundamental freedoms and the best way to protect our rights is to VOTE! Join the NAACP and fight to correct this Supreme Court mistake. VOTE.

We will:

- Mobilize communities in Beloit, Dane County, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Waukesha, and around the state.
- Turn protest into action:
Demand the federal government enshrine *Roe* into law.
Make civic engagement our number 1 priority.
Join law enforcement oversight groups to ensure civil rights during a summer of unrest.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization