

UU STATEMENTS RE THE SUPREME COURT DECISION ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE, June 2022

On June 26, 2022, the topic of the Goddess/Earth Circles gathering was the US Supreme Court Decision, *Dobbs v. Jackson*, regarding reproductive rights. Following are background documents for that and subsequent gatherings and discussions.

UUCC

June 23, 2022 From Chloe Briede, Interim Minister

Dear UUCC Community,

Like many of you, I am heartbroken by the news today about the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. We are angry. We are sad. We are in mourning. I know that many of you feel these emotions in your body. Beloveds, please know my love is with you as you experience these feelings today.

I am writing to you from the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. This morning, our UUA President, Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray, spoke passionately about our continued commitment as UUs to reproductive justice. Many of us will take to the street tonight here in Portland. Rev. Dr. Frederick-Gray reminds us that our UU faith is not a casual one. It calls us to action.

If you want to read the UUA's statement concerning the Supreme Court decision, [see below]
Sending love and light, Chloe

Sunday June 26, 2022

The Reproductive Rights decision and impact was noted at the beginning of the Sunday Service by Susan Claska Burnett.

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From the UUA President: UUs Remain Committed to Reproductive Justice

Boston, Mass. (June 24, 2022) – The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) issued its decision in the *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women Health Organization* case, which overturns *Roe v. Wade*, upending nearly 50 years of access to abortion. Below is a statement from Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), regarding this decision:

This decision manifests the worst fears of those of us who have been working for decades to protect and affirm reproductive rights.

The overwhelming majority of Unitarian Universalists (UUs) support keeping abortion legal in all or most cases. This is rooted in our Principles and our core religious beliefs that affirm gender equity. It also reflects a moral commitment to the idea that reproductive care is healthcare and is essential to the well-being of individuals and families.

This anti-choice decision by the Supreme Court infringes on our deeply held religious beliefs. Access to abortion and the right to choose is an issue of gender equality, bodily autonomy, and religious liberty, all of which are long held Unitarian Universalist religious teachings.

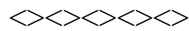
[As I said](#) [May 3, 2022 UUA statement] when the draft decision was leaked in May, I fear this decision will justify efforts to further limit the rights of women, pregnant people, and other vulnerable people and communities. Curtailing reproductive rights will be felt most by people of color, young people, poor and working-class people, and those living in rural areas. The rights of people in more vulnerable communities will only become more limited and diminish healthcare equity. Too many people are already deprived of ready access to comprehensive and equitable reproductive healthcare, including abortion access.

Unitarian Universalists are committed to Reproductive Justice, a framework created by Black women in the 1980s and 1990s, which affirms the human right to have children, not to have children, to parent the children one has in healthy environments, to safeguard bodily autonomy, and to express one's sexuality freely. The UU faith has a long history of collaborating in this movement and advocating for safe, legal, accessible abortion care.

The *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health* decision does not alter Unitarian Universalists' commitment to Reproductive Justice.

Comprehensive reproductive care, including access to abortion, is essential to the health and well-being of individuals and families. The decision to limit this basic human right means that this fight will shift to state legislatures across the country. Guided by our moral values, we are prepared to be a part of that ongoing struggle and continue to show up for Reproductive Justice in all aspects of public life.

Our faith calls us to advocate on behalf of all those who need ready access to safe, legal abortion care whenever and wherever they need it. We will not rest until that reality is true across the country. I urge lawmakers, elected officials, and leaders in public life across the country to take action for gender and healthcare equity for all.



Today, The Supreme Court robbed us of our bodily autonomy, our right to privacy, and our right to comprehensive reproductive care in the United States of America. The overturning of Roe v



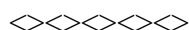
Wade via Dobbs v Jackson was expected, but that makes it no less awful.

The Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation intends

to help our community connect to ongoing activism to restore our rights. We encourage you to consider focusing your action at state-level work, as this fight is going to play out state by state. We will continue to provide resources for you to connect with groups in your local area as we can. We anticipate powerful opportunities to partner with groups on the ground both within and beyond our UU community in the coming months.

This is a dark day. We will kindle light.

To stay connected as this new phase of reproductive justice unfolds, [sign up on our website](#). uuwf@uuwf.org, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**



ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS 2022: We Do Not Consent: Rejecting Legal Challenges to Abortion GA 6.2022 (Passed)

As people who have had abortions, as co-conspirators and allies for Reproductive Justice, and as thoughtful advocates for family well-being, UUs have a moral responsibility to demand and ensure that abortion protections are codified into law.

Given the Supreme Court's anticipated overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, now is the time to revitalize the commitment we made to reproductive justice in our 2015 Statement of Conscience (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/reproductive-justice>)

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms that all of our bodies are sacred, and that we are each endowed with the twin gifts of agency and conscience. Each of us should have the power to decide what does and doesn't happen to our bodies at every moment of our lives because consent and self determination are holy. In the words of SisterSong, the Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, we unequivocally support every person's right

- To maintain personal bodily autonomy
- To have children
- To not have children
- To parent children in safe and sustainable communities

Disparities in resources or freedoms make it more difficult for certain groups of people to exercise autonomy over their own bodies. Although the legal right to abortion has been present, there has not been sufficient, consistent access to these services. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), people of low financial resources, those with disabilities, and those in the LGBTQI+ communities are most harmed by legal and systemic barriers to comprehensive reproductive health care. Our faith compels us to take liberatory action in response to oppression.

Controlling people's bodies during pregnancy is about enforcing white supremacy, patriarchy, and ruling-class power. Historically, those most affected by reproductive oppression have not been centered. Again, as advocated by SisterSong, we must:

- Analyze power systems
- Address intersecting oppressions
- Center the most marginalized
- Join together across issues and identities

Resolution: We, the delegates of the 2022 UUA General Assembly, call on Unitarian Universalists to:

1. Make a personal commitment to this work:
Educate ourselves and reflect on our personal connections to reproductive health, rights, and justice, reflecting on our values and how to act in accountable, sustainable ways. But don't stop with education and reflection — the purpose of this first step is to deepen our commitment for action in ways that don't cause further harm to affected people.
2. Organize:
 - Within our congregations: begin small group conversations or a Reproductive Justice team (join the Side With Love three-session Congregational Reproductive Justice Organizing Series);
 - Build relationships between our congregations and other faith activists, and then with local health clinics and organizations;

- Connect to SACReD, the Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity, which is building a multi-racial, multi-faith movement of congregations (<http://www.sacreddignity.org/>).
3. Advocate: Advocate for Reproductive Justice through op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, letters and visits to legislators, and direct action. Find legislators at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.
 4. Witness:
 - Speak publicly as people of faith whose UU theology compels us to work for Reproductive Justice and abortion access for all.
 - Turn out for protest events and rallies such as Bans Off Our Bodies, Rally for Roe, etc.
 - Wear UU Side With Love logo to witness that there is support from faith and religious communities.
 5. Build Networks of Support for Abortion Seekers:
 - Map the human, financial, and infrastructural assets of our congregations and have shared conversations about what each congregation is ready to do to directly support those who need abortions, whether located in a high-access or low-access state.
 - Support community trainings on Self-Managed Abortion (SMA), and encourage clergy to get trained in all-options pregnancy counseling.
 - Create networks with other local congregations and connect directly with local abortion funds and providers.
 - Engage with national networks that are creating infrastructure to support accessing abortion in both high-access and low-access states.
 - Discern the level of risk your congregation and its members are ready to take to support abortion access.
 6. Education:
 - Work to assure congregations provide Our Whole Lives education programs for all ages;
 - Consider talking to your minister about telling your abortion story from the pulpit or in other settings;
 - Work with your minister to create a Reproductive Justice Sunday Service;
 - Educate yourself at sites such as Faith Choice Ohio <https://www.faithchoiceohio.org/> for training.
 7. Fundraising:
 - For reproductive justice groups led by women of color, like SisterSong <https://sistersong.nationbuilder.com/donate> and SisterReach <https://www.sisterreach.org/donate.html>
 - For abortion access such as National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF) <https://donate.abortionfunds.org/give/323375/#!/donation/checkout>

Principal writers: Rev. Dr. Isabel Call, Rev. C. Nancy Reid-McKee

This AIW is endorsed by:

- The Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
- Unitarian Universalist Class Conversations
- Black Lives UU
- Church of the Larger Fellowship

Reproductive Justice 2015 Statement of Conscience, July 1, 2015

<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/reproductive-justice>