



Lesson 123

Abortion Rights After Dobbs

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It has been over a year since the case Roe v. Wade was overturned, and a lot has happened since then. In today's lesson we are going to briefly review the details of that case and the laws that US states passed following the decision. We will also learn about one of the most controversial products today: the abortion pill. Finally, we are going to look at what has occurred - actually, what women have suffered - under these conditions.

Decisions and Laws

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

The United States Supreme Court Case, Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, was opened on May 17, 2021. The reason this case began was because on March 19, 2018, Mississippi passed the Gestational Age Act which banned abortions after 15 weeks (except in medical emergencies). The Jackson Women's Health Organization (JWHO) filed suit in a federal district court. They called for an emergency restraining order for the bill, and on March 20th, the district court temporarily blocked the bill. The JWHO said that the bill was unconstitutional. However, the Mississippi State Health Officer, Thomas Dobbs, and others supported the bill banning abortion. Still, the district court continued to side with the JWHO, and on November 20th it officially struck down the bill. On December 14th, a United States Court of Appeals also affirmed the district court's decision. On June 15, 2020 Dobbs appealed to the Supreme Court, and on May 17, 2021 the Supreme Court announced they would hear the case. The JWHO argued that the right to an abortion is grounded in the 14th amendment, "physical autonomy and body integrity are essential elements of liberty protected by the Due Process Clause" (Cornell Law School). However, on June 24, 2022, in a 6-3 ruling, the Supreme Court overturned the lower court's decision, stating that the Constitution does not support abortion, giving each state the right to make abortion legal or illegal. (See YPG Lesson 107.)

Trigger Laws

The attempt to ban abortion access in the United States didn't start once the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, it started long before then. A "trigger" law is a law that isn't designed to be enforced once it's signed, instead, its goal is to wait for a certain event to take place. Once that event happens, the law will become enforceable under the new circumstances. Many conservative controlled states in the United States had trigger laws in place that would auto-ban abortion once Roe v. Wade was overturned. Thirteen states had passed anti-abortion laws specifically designed to go into effect once Roe v. Wade was ruled unconstitutional. Those thirteen states were: Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. However, more states had anti-abortion laws that were passed back in the 1900s previous to Roe v. Wade. The Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 had made these laws illegal, but if Roe was overturned, then these laws would resume their authority - effectively making them trigger laws. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin were the nine states that still had these abortion bans on the books since the 1970s. There is some overlap, meaning some states passed additional trigger laws even though there were already laws from the 1900s in place. On June 24, 2022, Roe v. Wade was officially overturned by the Supreme Court; not only did conservative states start banning abortions, but there was a trigger system in place that basically banned abortion automatically.

Old and New Pills

Mifepristone and misoprostol

The abortion pill is a very controversial medication; actually, there are two pills: mifepristone and misoprostol. In 2016 the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) changed the rules; it allowed the abortion pills to be used for medical abortions in pregnancies up to 10 weeks in (before then it had only been 7 weeks). Medical abortions can be done safely at home, but before that the patient would have to meet (in-person or virtually) with their health care provider for a check-up and then instructions and a prescription. Both pills can be taken together with mifepristone taken first and then misoprostol second within 48 hours, but misoprostol can be taken by itself - something that was done more often before mifepristone was approved. Nevertheless, together, the pills have a 97% efficiency up to nine weeks and they are used in over half of the abortions in the United States. The FDA approved mifepristone for use in abortions in 2000 and since 2019 it had been lowering some of the restrictions that are in place. Misoprostol has been approved for longer and it actually has other uses like helping fight ulcers and dealing with miscarriages. But together, they are most effective in medical abortions, which healthcare providers agree are safe and effective.

Banning the pill

After the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the United States Supreme Court, many conservative states went on to ban the abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol. “Last year [2022], a group of anti-abortion activists and organizations filed suit challenging the FDA over its approval of mifepristone, one of two medications most commonly used in medication abortion in the United State,” Planned Parenthood. In 22 states, access to the pill is readily available. In 15 states, it needs to be prescribed. And in 13 states it is almost completely banned. The states in which it is almost completely banned are conservative states such as Texas, Arkansas, and Wyoming. In the latter state, they want to criminalize the manufacturing, distribution, or prescription of the pill. Other states such as California and New York are taking measures to ensure that the pill is still available. For example, in California, legislation was passed to ensure that the pill was covered in Medi-Cal (California’s Medicaid health care program).

A new pill

On July 13, 2023 the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new pill. Norgestrel, sold by a brand called Opill, is the new pill that was recently approved by the FDA. Its goal is to prevent pregnancy, but what makes it unique is that it is the first daily oral contraceptive for nonprescription use. That means that you won’t have to first visit a physician or clinician and have them prescribe the pill for you. Instead, Opill can instantly be purchased over the counter or online. Patrizia Cavazzoni, the director of the FDA, says that the new pill is “safe and is expected to be more effective than currently available nonprescription contraceptive methods in preventing unintended pregnancy.” She also mentioned that Opill will be available for millions of people in the United States - a significant step toward the abortion access that has been repealed since Dobbs v. Jackson.

The State of Women's Health

Clinics Closed

In states where abortion rights have been attacked many abortion clinics are being and have been closed (or their services have changed). This has happened over 60 times since Roe v. Wade was overturned. These clinics are closing because they can no longer provide abortions - that was their main service so they can't make enough money anymore to stay open, or sometimes they close because the laws around abortions are too vague to risk providing them when the doctors could lose their licenses or go to jail. Still some clinics stay open offering other services, including birth control or post abortion check-ups if they can afford it. Sometimes clinics move across state borders to try to still service the community they used to, but there are still women who have to drive over 10 hours to reach an abortion clinic. The clinic in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization court case has closed too. It was the only abortion clinic in the state of Mississippi, the building was sold and now it is like a pawn shop. But not all people who buy closed down abortion clinics try to hide what it was: one group turned a closed clinic into an art studio but they kept some old signs to remind people what it used to be. Since Roe v. Wade was overturned many clinics have been put out of business, and the resulting lack of services has led to many complications.

Pregnancy Complications

Problem pregnancies are an issue that anti-abortion supporters refuse to deal with. Many abortion bans have clauses where it is legal for women to have access to them when their life or the life of the unborn child is endangered. However, there are some cases where neither the life of the mother or child are necessarily in danger but an abortion might be the better option. Cases often brought up are rape cases. The victim could very well be carrying a healthy baby but should she be forced to carry and deliver a child that was forced onto her? According to many abortion ban laws, she should. And that's a problem. Another example would be when the child is not growing properly. They aren't necessarily a health risk to themselves or the mother, but they might be born with many birth defects and other issues where an abortion might have been the better option. Should the mother be forced to carry that baby to term? According to abortion bans, she should. This often leads women to perform unsafe abortions on themselves and up to nearly 15% of maternal deaths are caused by unsafe abortions every year.

The Sunday Law Test

Testing us on equality

Understanding the laws and controversy over abortion is important because it's part of the Sunday Law test. Each reform line has a test that God's people are faced with. The Millerites were tested on slavery, the Adventists in 1888 were tested on the Sabbath, and today this Movement is tested on gender equality. At each waymark the test becomes harder and harder, and since we are close to the Sunday Law, we need to know what is expected of us in order to pass. Abortion is a major part of gender equality, and whether it's clinics shutting down or a new pill, the subject is being elevated as the days go by. Just because we support abortion, doesn't mean there's nothing more about the subject to learn. The more we understand abortion and the external events surrounding it, the better prepared we will be for the Sunday Law test, and the further we will progress as a Movement.

In summary:

Decisions and Laws



In a 6-3 ruling, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Dobbs, overturning Roe v. Wade



States had trigger laws in place since the 70's that would go into effect if and when Roe v. Wade was overturned.

Old and New Pills



Abortion pills allowed abortions to be performed safely at home and be up to 95% effective



In many states, the abortion pill is still available but in others it is completely banned



The FDA approved a contraceptive pill that can just be purchased over the counter- the first of its kind

The State of Women's Health

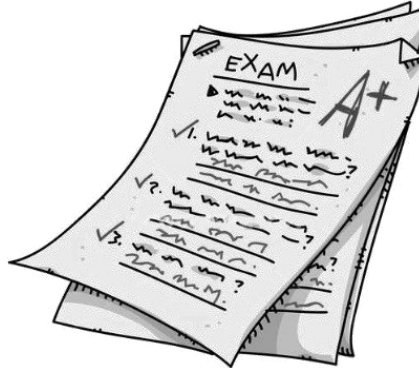


Many abortion clinics are closing because the laws make it nearly impossible to provide abortions legally



Some pregnancies don't fall under being unsafe yet the better option might have been an abortion

The Sunday Law Test



Gender equality is the
test for our time, and
abortion is an issue that
falls under that category

Official Youth Prophecy Group website:

youthprophecygroup.org

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us at:

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Find all the YPG lesson videos at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq_g

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1st Sunday of the month:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>