

Right Campaigns to End Abortion in America

This article was written for L'Anticapitaliste, the weekly newspaper of the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) of France.



The Republican Party is engaged in a massive political campaign to take away women's right to abortion. Because abortion is currently protected by the U.S. Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade*, Republicans have for several years been passing state laws to restrict abortions. They have passed 90 such laws in the past year and have introduced another 561 bills in 47 states this year. Five states have banned abortions when there is a fetal heartbeat at six weeks into pregnancy, others restrict who can perform an abortion or restrict abortion clinics. Some would ban abortion altogether. Some of these bills would give rights to the fetus, would ban in vitro fertilization, or stop medical research that uses fetal tissue.

Texas has just passed a law that allows individuals anywhere to sue someone in Texas who performs or helps with an abortion, and gives a \$10,000 reward to the person who provides such information. A taxi driver could be sued if he takes a woman to an abortion clinic and the person who identified the driver would get the \$10,000 reward.

All of this is leading to the U.S. Supreme Court which is scheduled in October to hear a case regarding a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 15 weeks and which could lead

the now more conservative court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and end women's right to abortion in America.

States that restrict abortions typically also have the worst record of protecting women's and infants' health, especially the health of Black women and babies. Mississippi with its strong anti-abortion law ranks 50th among the states in protecting the health of women, infants and children.

The anti-abortion movement stands at the center of the Republican Party coalition and abortion is the issue that can consistently mobilize large numbers in protest demonstrations. White Evangelical churches, which are the driving force of the anti-abortion movement, are also a core constituency of the Republican Party and the most fervent supporters of former president Donald Trump. But Black Evangelical churches and the Catholic Church also oppose abortion. The Republican states in the South, Midwest, and West with the most restrictive abortion legislation also supported Trump. Opposition to abortion, like opposition to LGBTQ rights and support for gun ownership, is at the heart of the far-right cultural agenda.

Roe v. Wade, which granted women the right to abortion, was a victory for the women's movement of the early 1970s. Women by the hundreds of thousands demonstrated for the right to legal and safe abortions, rather than unsafe back-alley abortionists or being forced to abort themselves. While *Roe* gave all women the right to a legal abortion, the Hyde Amendment forbid federal funds from being used to support abortions, though many working class and poor women could not afford to get an abortion.

A poll last year found that 47% of Americans believed abortion was morally wrong, while 44% thought it was morally acceptable. In terms of the law, 45% of men support women's right to choose, while 52% of women believe they have that right. Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics support abortion rights in nearly equal proportions.

Women's organizations such as the National Organization for Women and NARAL Pro-Choice America, abortion providers such as Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party all support abortion rights. Some teachers unions, where women make up the majority of members, also support abortion rights. The Democratic Socialists of America and others on the far-left support women's right to abortion.

While a battle is taking place in state legislatures, the courts and in the media, there is not yet much of a women's movement in the streets, such as there was in the 1970s. Hopefully it won't take the loss of women's right to abortion to create one.