

Press Release

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MARYLAND NOW APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ABORTION RIGHTS

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, June 29 -- Today the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a major victory for abortion rights and for women in their ruling in *June Medical Services vs. Russo*. A majority, led by Chief Justice John Roberts, overturned Louisiana's TRAP (targeted restrictions on abortion providers) law, which had created multiple restrictions on women seeking abortions by regulating the doctors providing them.

"We could not be more pleased that the Court overturned this law. It would have closed all but one clinic in the entire state of Louisiana, and wasn't even medically necessary to protect women's lives," said Sandy Bell, president of Maryland NOW.

"It is especially important since other states have passed their own versions of Louisiana's law, so the decision sends a critical message that they can't punish women for exercising their freedom to make this choice about their health care," Bell added.

The ruling was important in two ways. First, while the law was very similar to a ruling by the Court two years ago striking down a similar law in the state of Texas, the Court hearing the case was not. With Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement and subsequent replacement by Justice Kavanaugh, abortion rights foes hoped for a different outcome. Instead Chief Justice Roberts joined the Court's other liberal justices to uphold the precedent set by *Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstedt*.

Secondly, but far from insignificant, was that the state of Louisiana tried to argue this case as a women's rights decision, and instead a ruling was handed down that said that in fact these horribly restrictive laws are in no way protective and helpful for women in this circumstance.

"There are so many laws headed for the Court which challenge *Roe v. Wade's* very existence," Bell said. "Hopefully this ruling will send a message that a woman's right to choose an abortion as part of her reproductive health care is more secure than they imagine."

Chief Justice Roberts voted to uphold *Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstedt* in 2016. However, today's decision and his stated beliefs in upholding established law and legal precedent should help advocates of women's rights breathe a sign of relief. Associate justice Kavanaugh, who said in his confirmation hearings that he would not vote to overturn "settled law" clearly disappointed his supporters who had hoped he would keep his word.

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