

## **BWLA Statement on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* and the Reversal of *Roe v. Wade***

For decades, Black women in this country have been fighting for freedom in many facets of American life, from resisting slavery and segregation to securing voting rights and being a voice against violence. We have been on the front lines championing freedom for our communities and for our country in various forums from civil protests to advocacy before the Supreme Court. The choice of when and whether to have a family is one of those fundamental freedoms. Although Black women may not always agree on the many complexities of reproductive choice, and our personal views on this issue may splinter across the spectrum, make no mistake, Black women and Black families will be among those most impacted by the United States Supreme Court's recent decision *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Black women in America already face limited access to necessary healthcare<sup>[1]</sup> and disproportionately high maternal mortality rates.<sup>[2]</sup> The striking down of *Roe v. Wade* is a critical moment in our fight for health equity, and this reversal will only exacerbate the healthcare disparities which our community already faces.

Of equal importance, it warrants recognition that this decision abruptly upends decades-long precedent. It uproots what has long been accepted as the law of the land in this country. This sudden reversal of what has been understood as a core freedom protected under the Constitution is cause for alarm and foreshadows that other fundamental rights Black people and other marginalized groups have fought for may be at risk.

The Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago, Inc. remains committed to improving the administration of justice and advancing civil and human rights. This decision only further underscores the importance and imperative nature of the work that we do. It also serves as a timely reminder that elections do matter. We will continue to raise our voice on this and other issues, and we encourage all of you to do the same.

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[1] See Madeline Y. Sutton, Ngozi F. Anachebe, Regina Lee, Heather Skanes, *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Reproductive Health Services and Outcomes*, 2020; *Obstet Gynecol.* 2021 Feb (analyzing disparities in access to care across race; finding Black women have less access to contraceptives and other reproductive healthcare services but also suffer greater mortality than any other group from pregnancy complications including hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, and cardiomyopathy).

[2] See "Working Together to Reduce Black Maternal Mortality," Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *available at* <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/maternal-mortality/index.html> (explaining disparities in maternal mortality and recognizing that "Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women").