



SABA North America Statement on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*

June 24, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the 50 years of precedent protecting reproductive rights. SABA North America, which joined an amicus brief in the *Dobbs* case in September 2021, stands firm in its position that women and people who can become pregnant must have autonomy over their bodies and reproductive choices.

The 5-3-1 opinion in *Dobbs* upholds a Mississippi law banning abortions after 15 weeks and gives individual states the right to ban the procedure. In light of today's decision, South Dakota and Missouri immediately banned abortion, and thirteen other states have "trigger bans" designed to take effect immediately.

The impact of the decision in *Dobbs* will have immediate and grave impact on the lives of millions of people, including South Asian Americans. Immigrant, diverse, and other marginalized communities already face plenty of challenges when it comes to their reproductive health. Notably, South Asian women already face significant challenges to obtaining abortions and other reproductive health services that could be affected by today's decision. These challenges include substantial language barriers, economic barriers, immigration-related concerns, and sex-selective abortion bans that could unfairly profile AAPI women. Conversely, access to comprehensive reproductive care, including abortion access, provides families greater control over their finances, and emotional and physical health. Today's decision could result in the denial of those life-changing benefits for untold South Asian women.

Leading to *Dobbs*, states passed dozens of anti-abortion bills that exacerbated the myriad barriers faced by women in accessing reproductive services. Some of these laws, like fetal homicide laws, have also resulted in South Asian and other AAPI women facing disproportionately high criminal penalties. Purvi Patel, a daughter of Indian immigrants, became the first U.S. Citizen to be convicted under a fetal homicide law for attempting her own abortion after seeking medical care for nearly bleeding to death. She was sentenced to serve 30 years in prison. Her story is a clear example of how South Asian women have been impacted by disruption to reproductive access, and how they face disproportionately high criminal penalties.

SABA North America believes that reproductive health care, including abortion, plays a critical role in advancing social justice and human rights of all members of a community. Impediments to reproductive freedom would have a crippling effect on our community's economic, social, and political power to make decisions regarding its health and families.

These are the specific reasons SABA chose to prioritize reproductive rights and autonomy at our annual lobby day in April 2022, and why we continue to urge legislators to codify into federal law that abortion is a fundamental right. SABA believes that every person has the right to safe abortion care throughout the U.S., regardless of their state of residence.

Finally, in this time of intense political partisanship in the U.S., we are deeply troubled by the willingness of the Court to overrule precedent. In both *Dobbs*, and the June 23, 2022 decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc., et al. v Bruen*, the Court's decisions add to the perception that the Court is a political institution.

SABA North America vows to continue and redouble its advocacy to ensure that our people's rights to bodily autonomy are protected.