



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio Anti-Rape Coalition Fears Overturning Roe v Wade Means More Violation of Human Rights for Survivors of Sexual Violence

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) denounces the overturning of Roe v Wade by the United States Supreme Court on June 24, 2022. As OAESV has consistently stated in the past, survivors of sexual violence deserve bodily autonomy. Survivors of sexual violence often experience long-lasting trauma and commonly endure violation of their bodies. As Ohio's [federally designated anti-sexual violence coalition](#), we reject actions that make it illegal for a survivor to be in control of their own decisions if they become pregnant as a result of rape, incest, or reproductive control. We ask you to continue to educate yourself about HB598, which would ban abortion in Ohio, and we ask that you join us in advocating for fundamental rights.

OAESV's President & CEO, Rosa Beltré, details the ways this could affect survivors in Ohio and beyond: "We are horrified, but not surprised, by the Supreme Court's ruling. Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence recognizes that today, we have lost a fundamental right at the federal level, which was so hard earned. As a nation and as a state we digress, but we strongly believe that the rights of pregnant people are human rights, that gender equity is a human rights issue, and that healthcare is a human right. The time is NOW for Ohio to unite, to amplify our voices, to continue to be stronger than ever and advocate."

Now that Roe is overturned, Ohio is at risk of losing access to abortion. Ohio House Bill 598 and Senate Bill 123, if passed, would completely eliminate access to abortion in Ohio without exceptions. This type of legislation is frequently referred to as a "trigger ban". SB123 had two hearings last fall in the Senate Health Committee, and HB598 has had three hearings in the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee.

OAESV will tirelessly continue to elevate the voices and needs of the populations we serve. Survivors of sexual violence don't need to fear further violations of their human rights. We want survivors of sexual violence to know that there are states where abortion remains legal, and you can find more information [here](#).

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) denounces statements made by Ohio House Representative Jean Schmidt on April 27, 2022 in a hearing for HB 598, a bill that Rape is a traumatic event that often results in a range of life-long negative effects. While

the legal right to an abortion is fundamental, the truth is that the protections of *Roe* have never been enough to ensure access to reproductive healthcare. The work to sustain and build abortion access has always been just that – *work*. Work done in local communities, navigating systemic barriers of racism, classism, and other forms of oppression, to secure access to abortion. This work will not stop with today’s decision.

OAESV strongly maintains that reproductive rights are human rights. Access to healthcare is a human right. Every person has the right to have control over and freely decide matters related to their reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence – including state-sanctioned attacks on our fundamental rights. This decision is about more than abortion. It is rooted in oppression, deciding who has power over us, who makes decisions for us, and who will dictate our future access to legal rights.

These decisions fail to account for survivors of rape and incest. They run the risk of causing immeasurable harm, thereby beginning a cycle of generational trauma and suffering. Being forced to carry a pregnancy to term can have devastating psychological, physical, and financial impacts. Recovering from sexual assault is a difficult process; HB 598 would erase opportunities for survivors right at the moment when they need power and control over their lives in order to begin healing. Survivors must not be forced to endure pregnancies caused by the horrific acts perpetrated against them.

Know that today’s decision is not the end of this fight. Community members who wish to take action can educate themselves about [HB 598](#) and [SB 123](#), which would completely eliminate access to abortion in Ohio. We ask that you join us in advocating for your fundamental rights. [Contact your legislators](#), check your local ballot, and be ready to take this advocacy to the upcoming Midterm election this fall. Tell them about the importance of bodily autonomy for survivors of sexual violence and how essential the restoration of choice and agency is for survivors after rape. Lack of access of abortion clearly eliminates any and all opportunities for survivors to heal on their own terms. Survivors must have the ability to move forward with their life, without delay or alteration to their life as a result of an offender’s actions.

As Ohio’s federally designated anti-sexual violence coalition, OAESV strongly rejects the overturning of *Roe v Wade* and legislation such as HB 598 and SB 123.

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Interviews available upon request.

As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV uses an anti-oppression lens to advocate for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and to empower communities to prevent sexual violence.