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Nineteenth Century Abortion Ban Could Go into Effect if Legislature Fails to Act

The following is a response by Michele Mackey, Kids Forward's Chief Executive Officer, regarding today's Supreme Court ruling.

Today's extreme Supreme Court ruling may have the effect of allowing the enforcement of a 173-year-old Wisconsin law that makes it a felony for doctors to perform abortions.

Kids Forward urges state legislators to act quickly to protect access to basic reproductive health care in our state. Elected officials must not allow reproductive freedom to be eliminated in Wisconsin because of a law adopted by a legislature composed entirely of white men, long before women and people of color even had the right to vote. The legislature cannot allow the Supreme Court to roll back reproductive health care in Wisconsin by half a century.

If that archaic statute is allowed to go into effect, it will most adversely affect low-income families and families of color. They are more likely to experience barriers to traveling out of state to terminate a pregnancy, and lower-income families are also more likely to face even greater financial hardship if they are forced to birth a child. In addition, carrying a pregnancy to term is far riskier for Black women in Wisconsin, who have a maternal mortality rate five times that of white women.

All birthing people should have the right to control their own bodies, decide when and if to have children, and make decisions about what's best for the health of their families. Abortion care has always existed, will continue to exist, and should be recognized as the essential health care it is. Taking away that right and making abortions illegal does not eliminate the practice; it makes abortions more difficult and more dangerous.

Prior to the Roe decision, many birthing persons died or were severely injured by desperate efforts to end their pregnancies. State lawmakers must not allow the Supreme Court decision to roll back the clock by forcing some pregnant Wisconsinites to subject themselves to unsafe efforts to abort their pregnancies.

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Kids Forward advocates for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families in Wisconsin, notably children and families of color and those furthest from opportunity. Using research and a community-informed approach, Kids Forward works to help every kid, every family, and every community thrive.