



News From
The California Women's Law Center

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Statement of Katie Buckland, Executive Director of the California Women's Law Center, on the Supreme Court's Decisions to Uphold the so-called "Partial Birth Abortion" Ban:

"Today, the Supreme Court of the United States has given a reactionary partisan minority a victory over reasonable public health policy.

Experts estimate that perhaps 600 of the 1.5 million abortions performed in the U.S. each year are "partial birth abortions"- a term designed to manufacture outrage for what is medically known as dilation and extraction. In these cases, the fetus is so severely impaired or the pregnancy so complicated, that carrying the child to term would threaten the life or health of the mother.

What is important is now is what's next on the extremist's agenda. Supporters of the ban on dilation and extraction have been unequivocal in their desire to overturn *Roe v. Wade* thereby eliminating federal protection of a woman's right to choose.

To take away the fundamental right to responsible medical care and safe, legal abortions would be disastrous. Women would be forced to have illegal or unsafe abortions, or attempt to miscarry, jeopardizing their lives in the process. Furthermore, medical testimony has overwhelmingly supported the findings that dilatation and extraction is the safest procedure for a woman to end a pregnancy when certain health conditions make it dangerous to continue. Only a doctor working together with a patient can determine what procedures are necessary to ensure the patients health and well-being.

The legislation has not been revised and nothing in medical practice has changed in the years since *Stenberg v Carhardt* was ruled unconstitutional. What has changed is the Court. A moderate female justice has been replaced by a conservative male justice. Now a radical minority, empowered by an administration that does not respect an independent judiciary, has seized this opportunity to strip women and their doctors of the options they need to make the best decision for her health.

This result is the direct consequence of the Bush administration extreme agenda and it confirms what we suspected from the very beginning. Neither Chief Justice Roberts nor Justice Alito would answer questions about choice during their confirmation hearings.

They both deferred, saying they would be open to all arguments and that they respected precedent. It's now clear that they were being disingenuous.

Precedent would have led them to reject this law. Precedent says the Constitution protects the right of the individual – not the government – to make decisions concerning their own body. The country would be a safer place for women and their families if these justices had been faithful to their words and observed precedent rather than following personal ideology. Instead they have emboldened a dangerous, extreme right-wing minority that will not stop until they have forced American women into back alleys again.”

About the California Women's Law Center

Since its founding in 1989, the California Women's Law Center has worked in collaboration with others to protect, secure and advance the comprehensive civil rights of women and girls. CWLC has unparalleled expertise in strategies to protect and advance women's rights with programs to empower individuals to use the law to address the societal and legal issues that perpetuate ongoing gender inequity, women's health issues, reproductive justice and violence against women.

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