

Statement on the 36th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade

Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of the 36th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade.

Citing the constitutional right to privacy, the decision recognized women's equal standing with men to make decisions about their own bodies, and constituted a landmark step forward in the ongoing fight for gender equality.

Roe has advanced both the health care and human rights of women throughout America. It stands for the simple premise that government should not, and cannot, tell a person what to do with his or her own body.

As a proud cosponsor of the Prevention First Act, I certainly recognize that the term "pro-choice" is not synonymous with "pro-abortion."

Instead, to me, the right to choose is the right of a woman to make her own decisions about her health and future, free of coercion, based on medically-accurate information, and with access to all reproductive health options.

Roe has provided us a legal foundation upon which to build a framework of reproductive health options for women. Our responsibility, as we celebrate the decision's anniversary, is to make sure we honor the tradition of that decision by assuring that women and families throughout this great country have access to family planning and reproductive health options so that never again do women have to retreat to alleyways and dark corners to receive proper medical care.

Madam Speaker, January 22, 1973 marks a landmark day in our nation's constitutional history - for women, for health, and for individual liberty. Thank you.