



May 10, 2022

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the National Urban League, an organization with a 112-year history of advocating for policies that promote civil rights and economic empowerment for African Americans and other historically underserved communities, and the undersigned Urban League affiliate leaders, we write to urge you to protect women's health and personal freedoms by passing the *Women's Health Protection Act*, which codifies the right to an abortion into law.

In the draft *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* opinion, Justice Alito cites *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, as a key example of overturning precedent, stating that "the Court repudiated the "separate but equal" doctrine, which had allowed States to maintain racially segregated schools and other facilities."¹ However, he fails to highlight that by making this ruling, the Court overturned the states' ability to infringe on the fundamental right to equal protection under the law, including the equal access to quality education for Black children, under the 14th Amendment.

Specifically, the 14th Amendment states that "[n]o States shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."² Overturning *Roe v. Wade* would do quite the opposite. It would allow states to infringe on the personal health decisions of all women in this country and their liberty to decide what happens to their bodies. In addition, the draft *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision puts Black women in particular danger.

Black women are 2.5 times more likely to die as a result of childbirth than White women.³ Meanwhile, due to racialized income and wealth disparities, inequitable access to medical care, and the other insidious ways structural racism manifests, people of color are more likely to require abortion care *and* are less likely to be able to afford out-of-state travel to obtain care if it is made illegal in their state. Therefore, it is not only a gender justice issue but a racial justice issue to codify the right to an abortion into federal law and ensure all pregnant persons have the ability to make personal health decisions.

Furthermore, should the Court's draft decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* become final, it may cause a "domino effect" that threatens other judicial decisions targeted by an extreme conservative wing of this nation - decisions that protect individual freedom and civil rights under the 14th amendment. This decision undoubtedly is part of a larger anti-civil rights and anti-

¹ Pg. 36, available at <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/21835435/scotus-initial-draft.pdf>.

² U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1.

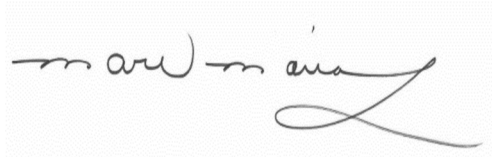
³ Hoyert, Donna. 2021. "Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2019."

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality-2021/maternal-mortality-2021.htm> (May 3, 2022).

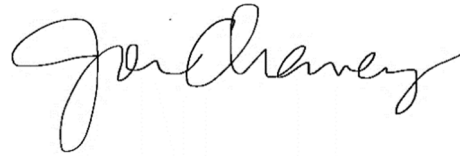
women’s rights movements that is poised to harm our democracy as a whole, and it must be answered by swift Congressional action.

We urge you to take up and pass the *Women’s Health Protection Act* as a vital step toward protecting and respecting this nation’s women and reasserting the commitment to equal protection under the law for all. Should you have any questions, please follow up with Yvette Badu-Nimako, Vice President of Policy and Legislative Affairs at ybadu@nul.org.

Sincerely,



Marc H. Morial
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Urban League



Joi O. Chaney
Executive Director, Washington Bureau
Senior Vice President, Policy & Advocacy
National Urban League

Urban League Affiliate Signatures

Teresa R. LeGrair, President/CEO Akron
Community Service Center and Urban League

William Barnes, President
Birmingham Urban League

Brenda Walker McCain, President
Madison County Urban League

Nancy Flake Johnson, President
Urban League of Greater Atlanta

Thomas Beauford, Jr., President
Buffalo Urban League

Theodia Gillespie, President
Quad County Urban League

Diane Stevens Robinson, Interim
Greater Stark County Urban League, Inc.

Quincy Dunlap, President
Austin Area Urban League

Otha Meadows, President
Charleston Trident Urban League

Tiffany Majors, President
Greater Baltimore Urban League

William Teddy McDaniel, President
Urban League of Central Carolinas, Inc.

Kyra Wallace, President
Southwestern Michigan Urban League

Candy Johnson, President
Urban League Greater Chattanooga, Inc.

Jennifer Lesko, President
Broome County Urban League

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Pres./CEO
Chicago Urban League

Marsha Mockabee, President
Urban League of Greater Cleveland

Christie Kuhns, J.D., Interim
Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio

Tracey R. Mosley, Interim
Urban League of Greater Columbus, Inc.

Erin Houston, Ph.D., President
Shenango Valley Urban League

Vanessa Allen-McCloud, Ed.D., President
Urban League of Northwest Indiana, Inc.

Stephanie Hightower, President
Columbus Urban League

Eric D. Brown, President
Urban League of West Michigan

Shenika Carter, Interim
Urban League of Metropolitan Denver

**Gail Wilson Awan, Ph.D.,
President**
Urban League of the Upstate, Inc.

N. Charles Anderson, President
Urban League of Detroit & Southeastern
Michigan

David J. Hopkins, President
Urban League of Greater Hartford

Crystal A. Orr, Interim
Urban League of Union County, Inc.

Judson W. Robinson III, President
Houston Area Urban League

Parris Smith, President
Lorain County Urban League

Portia Ballard Espy, Ph.D., President
Mississippi Urban League

Tony Mason, President
Indianapolis Urban League

Richard D. Danford, Jr., Ph.D., President
Jacksonville Urban League

Michael Lawson, President
Los Angeles Urban League

Ruben Anthony, Ph.D., President
Urban League of Greater Madison

Sadiqa Reynolds, J.D., President
Louisville Urban League

Tonja Sesley-Baymon, President
Memphis Urban League

Gwen Grant, President
Urban League of Greater Kansas City

Eve Hall, Ph.D., President
Milwaukee Urban League

Phyllis Y. Nichols, President
Knoxville Area Urban League

Steven Belton, President
Urban League of the Twin Cities

Porter G. Peoples, President
Urban League of Lexington-Fayette
County

Theresa Sanders, President Urban
League of Long Island, Inc.

Scott Hamilton, President
The Urban League of the State of
Arkansas

Judy Reese Morse, President
Urban League of Louisiana

Clifton Harris, President
Urban League of Middle Tennessee

Carlos Carter, President
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
Warner Center

Arva Rice, President
New York Urban League

Nkenge Harmon Johnson, J.D., President
Urban League of Portland

Vivian Cox Fraser, President
Urban League of Essex County

Gilbert Bland, Interim
Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc.

James Hall, Interim
Urban League of Racine & Kenosha, Inc.

Wayne Brown, Interim
Urban League of Nebraska, Inc.

Seanelle Hawkins, J.D., President
Urban League of Rochester

Dawn Harris Jeffries, Ph.D., President
Tri-County Urban League

Dwayne Crenshaw, J.D., President

Andrea Custis, President

Greater Sacramento Urban League

Michael P. McMillan, President
Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis

Watson Haynes, President
Pinellas County Urban League

Thomas S. Conley, President Greater
Warren-Youngstown Urban League

George H. Lambert, Jr., President
Greater Washington Urban League

Patrick J. Franklin, President
Urban League of Palm Beach County, Inc.

Jennifer Thompkins, President
Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League

Urban League of Philadelphia

Ray King, President
Urban League of San Diego County

Michelle Merriweather, President
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Marcus Johnson, President
Springfield Urban League, Inc.

Henry M. Thomas III, President
Urban League of Springfield

James Perry, President
Winston-Salem Urban League

Sorraya Sampson, President
Urban League of Westchester County

Kenneth E. Maxey II, Interim
Urban League of the Greater San Francisco Bay
Area