

‘A coat hanger is not a choice’: New Yorkers rally against Supreme Court abortion decision

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Abortion report draws protesters to Supreme Court

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Angry abortion-rights activists filled the streets of New York City on Tuesday after a sneak peak of a justice's decision revealed the U.S. Supreme Court is poised to strike down a woman's right to choose established by the landmark Roe v. Wade case.

At the Barclays Center in Brooklyn and at Manhattan's Foley Square, sign-waving women and men railed against [the leaked draft ruling](#) that could reignite one of the fiercest political battles in the country.

"It's the most important thing we're dealing with right now," said Melissa Meshulam, 44, an art teacher from the Bronx who was protesting with her two children. "A bunch of men sitting in a room deciding women's fate. We're in a blue state, but we have to advocate for all the people who can't fight for themselves. New York has to be a sanctuary state for people in need of help. My kids don't understand everything. They know this is important, and they need to know this hard truth. My kids can handle it."



Protesters rally in support of abortion rights on Tuesday in Manhattan's Foley Square. (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)

Emma Deady said she's not sure she can. She expressed her anger with a homemade sign that said, "A coat hanger is not a choice."

"I don't even know where to start," said Deady, 30, of Manhattan. "This is such a massive step backward. We're the first generation of women in America who will have fewer rights than our mothers. I'm in shock. I'm having trouble articulating my rage right now. Without rights over our own bodies, we're hardly human anymore."

The abortion fire was stoked Monday night when the leaked copy of a decision draft was published by Politico. The draft was of an opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito, who railed against the 1973 ruling.

"Roe was egregiously wrong from the start," Alito wrote in the draft ruling. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives."

The authenticity of the draft was confirmed by Supreme Court Justice John Roberts who ordered an investigation into the leak. He stressed that the court's decision was not final.

The Roe decision in 1973 determined that laws criminalizing abortions violated the 14th Amendment.

Tuesday's protests looked much like they did 50 years ago, when pro-choice and pro-life activists squared off over the bitterly divisive issue.

Long before social media emerged as a protest tool, both sides waged political war the old-fashioned way — in the streets.



Protesters rally in support of abortion rights on Tuesday in Manhattan. (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)

Some of the demonstrators chanting and marching on Tuesday were the same protesters who hit the streets of the '70s. Never did they imagine that as senior citizens, with children who have children of their own, they'd be marching — more slowly — fighting the same fight they did years ago.

"I was protesting in Union Square in 1970 pregnant with my first son," said Jayne Goldstein, 75, an interior designer. "I feel awful, really awful that I have to be back here. I feel the world is spiraling out of control."

Goldstein fears it won't stop at abortion rights.

“They’re going to come for same-sex marriage, voters’ rights and all the things we fought for,” Goldstein said. “All these [Supreme Court] justices in their confirmation hearings said it was settled law. They knew what they were going to do, and they lied. It’s beyond comprehension.”

The New York rallies were among passionate demonstrations going on from coast to coast. At the Supreme Court itself, a small group of anti-abortion activists gathered outside but were far outnumbered by abortion-rights protesters.



Protesters rally in support of abortion rights in Foley Square on Tuesday in Manhattan. (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)

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Protesters waved signs that included “Bans off our bodies” and “Protect women’s rights.” Others brandished coat hangers, used as symbols of illegal, unsafe abortions.

“It’s a threat to all of us,” said Xavier Smith, 38, a musician from Brooklyn. “It obviously affects women, but it will cost us all. There’s always a price to pay, and

women are going to pay for it with their lives. Women are going to have abortions. This is not a done deal. It will go underground, and many will die. That's what happened in the past."

A [Washington Post-ABC News poll](#) on Tuesday revealed that a majority of Americans support the Supreme Court upholding Roe v. Wade. The poll, conducted last week, found 54% of Americans support upholding Roe, while 28% support overturning it. The poll found 18% had no opinion.



Several hundred people gather at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York City on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 to protest the Supreme Court's apparent decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)

A USA TODAY/Ipsos poll published this month found that nearly half of the nation said abortion should be "legal and accessible." About a third of Republicans felt that way, compared with 73% of Democrats.

State Attorney General Letitia James called the dreaded ruling revealed in the leaked decision "a call to action" and "a five-alarm fire." She told protesters abortion wasn't just an issue for her.

“I came to this issue in a very personal way,” said James, saying she got pregnant right after being elected to the City Council. “I chose to have an abortion. I walked proudly into Planned Parenthood. And I make no apologies to anyone.”

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I SURVIVED
AN ILLEGAL
ABORTION
in Birmingham
Ala. in 1969
#NeverAgain



Angela Fremont holds a sign at a pro-choice rally in Foley Square in Manhattan on Tuesday, May 3, 2022. (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)











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Around 7:30 p.m., some 2,000 demonstrators marched toward Washington Square Park to continue the protest, chanting: “Abortion is a human right, not just for the rich and white.”