



MY BODY MY CHOICE

# Inside New York's Abortion Rights Rally to Uphold Roe v. Wade

Thousands gathered to condemn the Supreme Court's pending decision to overturn the landmark case.

*Photography by* **Serichai Traipoom**  
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Photo by Serichai Traipoom

**T**here was never any doubt that Tuesday would see protests break out all across America. In the late hours of Monday May 2, Politico published an unprecedented leak of a drafted Supreme Court opinion that spelled out the end for *Roe v. Wade*, posing the largest threat to an American's right to right to abortion access in the decades since the landmark 1973 legislation passed. (You can read everything we know—and don't know—about the contents and implications of the document, which Chief Justice John Roberts has since confirmed is authentic, here.) Demonstrations started out early in Washington, D.C., where pro-choice advocates gathered outside the Supreme Court to demand that the Biden administration take action. And they quickly spread across the nation to cities like New York, where one of the largest protests took place in downtown Manhattan's Foley Square.

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The thousands who gathered at the intersection outside the New York County Supreme Court included ordinary citizens and public figures alike. And with the situation so dire, a number didn't shy from sharing their personal experiences with abortion with the public. Some did so via signs—one, for example, read “I survived an illegal abortion in Birmingham, Ala. in 1969”—while New York Attorney General Letitia James revealed that she had an abortion earlier in her career during a speech before the crowd. “I was in this place,” she said. “I was just elected, and I was faced with a decision: Whether to have an abortion or not. And I chose to have an abortion. I walked proudly into Planned Parenthood. And I make no apologies to anyone, to no one...it's our right under the law.”

James went on to note that the majority of

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Americans are of the same opinion: A recent national survey found that 53 percent feel that *Roe v. Wade* should be upheld, and only 28 percent feel it should be overturned. (The remaining 18 percent had “no opinion.”) An even larger number—roughly 70 percent—expressed that they felt the decision of whether or not a woman should be able to have an abortion should be left to the woman and her doctor. But, as some protesters were quick to point out, the issue isn’t just about women. Hear from some of the many who turned out in full force, here.

Photo by Serichai Traipoom

“I’m here because I know how hard it is to be pregnant—I am currently 30 weeks pregnant with my second child. It is abhorrent, terrifying, and disgusting to make someone carry a fetus to term given the risks of pregnancy and the challenges, the financial implications, etc. It feels very personal right now, but I've always been very much supportive of people are getting abortions when they need to get abortions —no questions asked, no complications, no excuses. Leave us alone.” — Rebecca Jacobs

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“I'm here because my mother raised me to stand up for my rights [and] everyone's rights. Regardless of gender, sex, sexual orientation, race, we deserve basic human rights. Abortion is healthcare and healthcare is a human right, period.” — Roman Doumbia

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“I’m here because we have to stand up to let people know that illegal abortions will happen again if Roe v. Wade is overturned. We cannot count on every state being a safe place for people to get abortions.” — Rebecca Fremont

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A protester holds up a sign with a symbol long associated with the pro-choice movement: a wire coat hanger. The reference to the common pre-*Roe v. Wade* method of halting a pregnancy has taken on new significance as more and more point to the fact that studies show that rather than lowering the rate of abortions, limiting access increases the health risk of those who need (and therefore continue to get) them.

Photo by Serichai Traipoom



“I’m here because it’s 2022 and this is fucking ridiculous. This shouldn’t be an issue at all. The Supreme Court has no right to do this to women. And abortion is just the tip of the iceberg. This whole [Supreme Court Justice] Alito thing of *If it’s not in the constitution*—you know what? The constitution was written way long ago by a bunch of white men, with only a few states. Gay rights, gay marriage, birth control, contraception, interracial marriage—this is all at jeopardy right now. So it isn’t

just abortion, it's just a little bit of what this  
all represents.” — Karin Schall

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Alito may have received the most criticism,  
but he wasn't the only Supreme Court

Justice singled out. One grouping made it so that the rest of those in office—such as Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett—loomed large over the crowd.

Amy Schumer, who introduced Wright, addresses the crowd.

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“I’m out here in support of these women who are fighting for their reproductive rights. I don't think we should go backwards on this decision. I think that this is something that is a human rights issue, a health issue, and we need to stop the war on women. As men, we stand in solidarity with them and we’re here to lend our support.” — Stewart Mitchell

Photo by Serichai Traipoom

“This is an expected decision, but it’s just as impactful and horrible as we expected it to be. It starts with abortion, then it comes for all of us—queer people, people with uteruses are now on the chopping block to have their rights taken away. It is very important, especially with this being a memo that could theoretically get changed—though I don't have high hopes of Alito changing his mind. But if there’s a fear that this will have large-scale impacts on economy and normal ways of living, perhaps there will be some pushback to the decision. I still have hope.” — Frankie Grail-Bingham

Argentina's *pañuelo verde* (green scarf) has gone from a symbol of Latin American feminism to an international one.

Artist, organizer, and activist Sarah Sophie Flicker was among those to rep the color green. Originally known as the Marea Verde, the Green Wave has gone international proving influential in reproductive rights reformation in Latin America.

Photo by Serichai Traipoom

“I’m here because gathering in protest is one of many tools that we can use to get a head start on doing as much as we can to negate this legislation.” — Sarah (left) pictured with Nwsana (right)

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“I’m out here today because reproductive justice affects all of us. It’s about bodily autonomy. It affects any person who can become pregnant. If we let them ban abortion, they’re already coming for trans people, next they’re going to come for the gays, for the immigrants, for the handicapped. We gotta show solidarity, we gotta be together and say, ‘No, we won’t go back.’” — Allone

“I think that political systems are only valuable in so far as they take care of people. And I see decades of deepening inequality, and the backslide of individual liberties, and I refuse to be silent. My generation knows the country we want, and politicians need to listen.” — Hannah Story Brown (right) pictured with Sarah Yasmine Marazzi-Sassoon (left)

An important reminder that real  
superheroes fight for human rights.

Photo by Serichai Traipoom

“I’m here, but I’m annoyed that they don’t have representation for access to abortion rights for everyone. This isn’t just a women’s issue—anyone that doesn’t identify as male could have an abortion, but the focus of this protest is mainly around women’s rights, when abortion is not in fact just a woman’s right. This protest was basically for white women to have abortion rights. There isn’t any equity here because if we talk about discrepancies in the Black community, we do not get proper healthcare which leads to getting

people themselves when it comes to getting abortions. That's very important if we're gonna talk about this at all, we need to talk about access to important things in disenfranchised communities for everyone, not just white women.

“You know, if this was actually about autonomy over somebody's body, then this amount of people would show up everyday for the restrictions being put on children's body and the youth, and any healthcare that is for trans and queer people, or that is related to hormone treatment or therapy. This is specifically showing up for the protection of white women's uteruses, and we know that not just women have uteruses. We know that if this many people actually cared about bodily autonomy, they would have shown up a long time ago.” — Anonymous

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A protester holds up a green sign that translates from Spanish to English as “abortion on demand & without apology.”

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“I am here to support this movement and

I am here to support this movement and document. It feels so dated. Why should we be having to fight for this right now? The best thing that I can hope comes out of this is that everyone votes.” — Hatnim Lee

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“Reproductive rights are human rights. I used to be a physician and I can’t even believe this is happening in this day and age. I’m also a gun violence prevention advocate and everything about this country is like the pro death party is winning—like minority rule and majority apathy. People have no idea what we’re facing, and we’re going backwards at breakneck speed.” — Sonni Mun (right), pictured with Doris Casap and Victoria Cook

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“I think abortion should be a woman’s choice. I think it’s really hypocritical that people were really upset about their choice to mask up and now they are the same one’s making decisions on other people’s bodies.” — Chin-Feng Yeh

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A sign that read “Republicans care about fetuses until they become women” echoed a similar sentiment.

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“I want to concluded [my speech] with the words of a young woman from Texas, home of some of the most regressive and harmful anti-choice laws. Her name is Paxton Smith and she was a valedictorian of her high school last year. She defied her school’s administration to speak out on her graduation. Paxton said, ‘I have dreams, hopes, and ambitions. Every girl here does. We spent our whole lives in future and without our consent or input. Without our control over our futures, our futures have been striped away from us.’

“People like Paxton in Texas, that’s who we’re fighting for—little girls like that. People like Paxton are why we will never ever give up. You better believe that I’m gonna continue to fight with all of you and you better believe that we need to stand up against those right-wing ideologues and let them know that it’s our body and our choice. And it’s important that we continue with these types of actions until that decision comes out. And I want you to know that we can turn it around, and if we can’t turn around the United States Supreme Court, let us turn around this country.” — New York State Attorney General Letitia James

