



News From
U.S. Senator

Barbara Boxer

112 Hart Senate Building, Washington D.C. 20510
Communications Office 202-224-8120 <http://boxer.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release:
January 22, 2004

Contact: David Sandretti
(202) 224 - 8120

STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Thirty-one years ago today, the Supreme Court handed down their decision on *Roe v. Wade*. It was a monumental day for women.

For the first time, a woman's right to choose whether or not to continue a pregnancy was protected under the constitutional right to privacy.

Roe v. Wade has kept women from being forced to continue pregnancies that could endanger their health or render them infertile. And in the past 31 years, countless lives have been saved by getting women out of back alleys and into safe, clean and legally protected facilities. That is why I have been fighting throughout my adult life to protect the right to choose.

Well, we certainly need pro-choice voices in Congress today. Women's reproductive rights are rapidly eroding as a result of the unrelenting efforts of the Bush Administration, the Republican Caucus, and powerful anti-choice organizations. And they make no secret that their ultimate goal is to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

With just a one-vote margin protecting *Roe* in the Supreme Court, we cannot afford to take these fundamental rights for granted. The threats we face to our right to choose are real and dangerous and have already come our way.

That is why we are here to announce new federal legislation that will protect a woman's right to choose.

The Freedom of Choice Act of 2004 would establish a statutory right to choose within the same parameters articulated by the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*.

That means women would have the absolute right to choose whether to continue or terminate their pregnancies before fetal viability, and that right would be protected by this legislation.

(more)

The Freedom of Choice Act also supercedes any law, regulation or local ordinance that impinges on a woman's right to choose.

That means a poor woman cannot be denied the use of Medicaid if she chooses to have an abortion.

That means that abortions cannot be prohibited at public hospitals, giving women more choices than private clinics.

That means that we respect a woman's ability to make her own decision, and don't force women to attend anti-choice propaganda lectures, which submit women to misleading information, the purpose of which is to discourage abortion.

That means that women serving our country in the military overseas would be able to afford safe abortions that can be performed in a military hospital.

And, under our law, women who are denied their right to choose, or discriminated against will be able to go to court to enforce the law.

We need to take steps to secure our right to choose. Anti-choice is anti-woman, anti-equality, and it demonstrates a lack of respect for the intelligence and compassion that women possess. It is time to write Roe v. Wade into law.

###