Extra Space Edition

Our Bodies, Our Rights: What’s Going On at the Supreme Court?

Words to Know
Words to Know in this Toolkit
Abortion

When a person decides to end their pregnancy without giving birth.

Abortion funds

Groups that give money to people who need abortions.

Amicus brief

A way for people who aren’t part of a lawsuit to tell a court what decision it should make.
Bodily autonomy

The right of people to control what happens to their bodies. Bodily autonomy means people get to make their own decisions about their bodies.
Buck v. Bell

A Supreme Court case decided in 1927. Carrie Buck was a woman with an intellectual disability who lived in an institution. The state of Virginia wanted to forcibly sterilize her because she had an intellectual disability.

The state of Virginia had a law saying people living in institutions could be forcibly sterilized. Carrie Buck brought a lawsuit against the people who ran the institution. In Carrie Buck’s case, she was asking the court to tell the people who ran the institution not to forcibly sterilize her.

The Supreme Court decided it was okay for the state of Virginia to sterilize Carrie Buck. The Supreme Court said it was alright because Carrie Buck had an intellectual disability.
Complications

Medical conditions that happen because someone is pregnant.
Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization

Another Supreme Court case. The Supreme Court will make a decision in it this year, in 2022. We sometimes call Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization “Dobbs” for short.

In 2018, the state of Mississippi made a law saying pregnant people couldn’t get abortions if the fetus was more than 15 weeks old. This goes against what the Supreme Court said in Roe and in Casey.

Now, Mississippi is asking the Supreme Court to change its mind. Mississippi wants the Supreme Court to undo its decisions in Roe and Casey.
Doe ex. rel. Tarlow v. D.C.

A court case that has to do with bodily autonomy for people with disabilities. Three women with intellectual disabilities brought a lawsuit against the Washington, D.C. Developmental Disabilities Administration. The women said that the Developmental Disabilities Administration forced them to have surgery against their will.

Doe ex rel. Tarlow v. D.C. did not go to the Supreme Court. But one of the lower court judges who decided it is now a Supreme Court justice. That justice’s name is Brett Kavanaugh.

In Doe ex rel. Tarlow v. D.C., Brett Kavanaugh said that the Developmental Disabilities Administration didn’t have to ask the women what they thought about the surgeries. Brett Kavanaugh said that what the women thought about the surgeries didn’t matter.
Eugenics

The idea that some people have “good traits” and some people have “bad traits.” People who support eugenics think that people they believe have “good traits” should have lots of children. They want to get rid of groups of people that they think have “bad traits.” They want to make sure those people don’t have children.

People who believe in eugenics think that people with disabilities are worth less. People who believe in eugenics also think that people of color are worth less.

Fetus

The new human growing inside a pregnant person.
Forcibly sterilize

When the government forces someone to get a surgery that makes it so that person can’t have children.

Justice

A judge on the Supreme Court.

Lawsuit

When you take someone to court. You tell the court what the person did or is trying to do to you. Then, you ask the court to tell the person what to do.
Medication abortion

When a pregnant person takes pills to end their pregnancy.

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey

A Supreme Court case decided in 1992. Planned Parenthood is a group that provides abortions and other health care. They brought a lawsuit against the state of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania had passed laws making it harder to get an abortion in that state. The Supreme Court decided that abortion would still be legal. But the Supreme Court also decided that there could be more laws against abortions.
Reproductive

When something is about having children.

Reproductive justice

A human right that says all people have the right to:

• Have bodily autonomy and self-determination
• Have children, if they want to
• Not have children, if they want to
• Parent their children in a safe and healthy world
Right to privacy

A right that says the government should not interfere with people’s privacy. When we say “the right to privacy,” we are not talking just about people doing things in private. We are talking about the government not getting to decide what people do in their personal lives.
Roe v. Wade

A Supreme Court case decided in 1973. We sometimes call Roe v. Wade “Roe” for short. A woman who went by the fake name Jane Roe needed an abortion in Texas. But Texas law said that abortion was illegal. So Jane Roe brought a lawsuit to try and change the law so she could get an abortion. The Supreme Court decided that abortion had to be legal in most cases during pregnancy.

Self-determination

The right to make choices about your own life. Self-determination means people get to choose what they do with their lives.
Sexually assaulted

Being forced to have sex with someone.

Sterilized

Having surgery so you cannot get pregnant anymore.
Supported decision-making

A way to make decisions. A person with a disability chooses someone to help them understand or communicate a decision. The person they choose is their supporter. The person with a disability makes their own decision and can get help from the supporter.

Supporter

A person that a person with disabilities chooses to help them make or communicate a decision.
Supreme Court

The highest court in the United States. They have the final say on laws.

Surgical abortion

When a pregnant person has surgery to end their pregnancy.