

Remarks at a Campaign Event With Reproductive Rights Organizations
June 23, 2023

The President. Jill said you women should take off your high heels, or else you should just lie down. *[Laughter]* My lord, talk about commitment, standing all this time. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Doc. I appreciate that introduction. I really do.

My name is Joe Biden. I'm Jill's husband and Kamala's running mate. *[Laughter]* You all think I'm kidding. I want to thank—start by thanking Kamala for taking the lead on this issue and so many other issues in our campaign and our governing. And I want to thank Jill and Doug for their work in shining a spotlight on the issue affecting women.

And I want to thank all of you—EMILYs List, NARAL, Planned Parenthood—for your endorsement. It's a big deal. It's a big deal. Your support was critical last time around, and we're so grateful for it and we're hard working with you again.

I can't think of three organizations who will do more—have more consequential impact on the right and the ability to regain freedom. You know, you have troops on the ground in every single State, and we're going to need all those troops in those States.

We want to thank Nancy Pelosi, a good friend, who's been an ally and friend of mine for a long time, as well as the many Members of the Congress who are here and elected officials from all around the country.

To state the obvious—and though it's clear by now; it's almost redundant to say it—this fight really matters. It really, really matters. Since the day the *Dobbs* decision came down 1 year ago tomorrow, we've seen the devastating effects all across the country: women turned away from emergency rooms, denied lifesaving care; moms, college students, teachers, nurses traveling hundreds of miles to get basic reproductive health care.

And we just heard from Jill, who's heard the stories firsthand. You know, we've all heard the stories firsthand. People come up to you—people we've known and people we've grown up with. You know, and since that dark June day last year, each of you has worked tirelessly to fight back.

In the *Dobbs* decision, the Court particularly—practically dared the women of America to be heard. This is what the majority wrote: "Women are not without electoral or political power." You ain't seen nothing yet, Court. *[Applause]* No, I really mean it. Think of the challenge that is.

I said at the time that I didn't think the Court—or, for that matter, the Republican Party, who for decades have pushed their extreme agenda—have any clue about the power of women in America. I said they were about to find out. And by the way, in the midterms, we were supposed to be blown out. They did find out. And they're going to find out again. I really believe—in my heart, I believe it.

Look, we were criticized for making this an issue in the midterms. In fact, I got attacked for it. But you know, all along, what Kamala and Doug and Jill and I knew as well: The Americans would not stand by and let the Court take away the right that's so fundamental, that we'd fight—we'd fight—to restore these protections of *Roe v. Wade* and make it the law of the land once again. And we're going to do that. And we will not let the most personal decisions fall in the hands of politicians instead of woman and their doctors.

The Court was betting that all of us would remain silent. But my mother had an expression. She said: "Joey, never bow, never bend, never yield. Just get up." [Applause] Oh, you think I'm kidding? You didn't know my mom. [Laughter]

That the American—that the women of America would remain silent was just beyond comprehension; that Kamala and I would remain silent. Well, we're not. We will not remain silent.

And all over this country, thanks to the hard work of the voters, delivered a clear message. In Kansas, in Michigan, in Kentucky, in the polls in November, Americans voted to protect the woman's right to choose. In fact, you all showed up and beat the hell out of them. [Laughter] No—[applause].

And what's really remarkable is despite the will of the American people, MAGA Republicans have made clear that they don't intend to stop with the *Dobbs* decision. No, they won't, until they get a national ban on abortion. Speaker McCarthy said, quote, "Our work is far from done." End of quote. Senator Lindsey Graham wants to——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——wants to criminalize doctors and nurses who provide medical care for their patients; make it a crime. Republicans in Congress have proposed three national abortion bans just this last year. Well, make no mistake about it: If somehow Congress were to pass a national ban, I will veto it.

Let's also be clear that this decision also risks the broader rights of privacy for everyone. That's because the fundamental right to privacy, which *Roe* recognized, has served as a basis for so many other rights that are ingrained in our fabric of our country: the right to make the best decisions for your health, the right to use birth control. Did you ever think we'd be arguing about that?

Audience members. No!

The President. No, I'm serious.

The right to marry the person you love.

Judge Thomas said as much in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs*, writing, quote, "For that reason, in future cases we should reconsider all the Court's substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*."

These guys are serious, man. I said it when the decision came out, and people looked at me like I was exaggerating. But they're not stopping here. Make no mistake, this election is about freedom on the ballot once again.

Look, we've made so much progress. We can't let it take us backwards. I believe that one of the best ways to continue making progress is to ensure women are at every table where every decision is made. And that's not hyperbole. That's not hyperbole.

I promised that my administration would look like America. My Cabinet is the first majority-female Cabinet in history. You just heard from the first woman ever Vice President of the United States. And perhaps the most critical of milestones we mark tomorrow. We are reshaping our courts. We've appointed more Black women to the Federal Circuit Courts of Appeal—[applause]—than every other President in American history combined. Combined.

And of course, I was proud to keep my promise to appoint Justice Jackson the first Black woman to the Supreme Court. And by the way, she's smarter than the rest. [Laughter] She is—I'm serious. She's incredible. She is genuinely incredible.

We're also making progress building an economy where all Americans have the opportunity to work, raise a family, buy a home, start a business. We made historic investments in childcare, making it more affordable so parents can work and provide for their kids at the same time.

The first major piece of legislation I signed, the American Rescue Plan, provided historic tax relief for millions of families, helping to recover childcare costs through the largest increase in history of childcare tax credit and the dependent—the dependent care child—tax credit.

We helped 200,000 children care providers stay open and small businesses continuing to go through the pandemic and continuing to serve more than 9.5 million children. These things matter.

I signed legislation increasing funding for childcare and development block grants by 30 percent, helping low-income families afford childcare. But there's so much more to do. And we're fighting over abortion?

For example, the United States is still one of the only countries in the world that doesn't guarantee paid leave. I remain committed to changing that and bringing us in line with every other single major economy in the world by passing a national program for paid leave and medical leave.

We can get all this done and so much more. We can restore the protections of *Roe v. Wade* and make it the law of the land again, but we're going to need your help badly. So let me ask you this: Do you think your colleagues are with us?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Well, I tell you what, they'd better damn well be. [*Laughter*]

After the *Dobbs* decision came down, I signed two Executive orders, and my administration took a number of actions to protect the access to reproductive health care.

And it's just—the one I signed—the third Executive order, which is to strengthen the affordability of high-quality contraception. The idea that I had to do that—I mean—no, I mean, really, think about. Think about it.

I know I'm 198 years old—[*laughter*—]but all kidding aside, think about that. I never ever thought I'd be signing an Executive order protecting the right to contraception. But the only sure way to protect a woman's health and rights is for Congress to pass a law.

As I've said before, the Court got *Roe* right 50 years ago, and I believe Congress should restore the protections of *Roe v. Wade* once and for all. But we need your help. So I'll ask again: Are you with us? You're going to get this done? I really mean it.

So let me close—let me close with this.

Over the last week or so, we've seen extraordinary support from three of the most important voices in the country coming together to get behind this campaign: organized labor, climate leaders, and all of you representing the powerful groups fighting to protect the advantage for women's rights.

Your strong support, your determination, your advocacy are why I've never—I know I've said this before, and I want you to listen to it again, and I mean it from the bottom of my heart: I have never been more optimistic about America's future than I am today.

And with your help, Kamala and I are going to continue to make the progress. We're going to finish this job.

We just have to remember who the hell we are. We're the United States of America. And there's nothing, nothing beyond our—if we work together.

So God bless you all. May God protect our troops.

Let's go get this done. Let's get this done! Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Serina E. Floyd, chief medical officer, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC; Douglas C. Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala D. Harris; and Rep. Nancy Pelosi. He also referred to Executive Order 14101.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Reproductive rights organizations, campaign event.

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