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To: [Press](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Statements by Florida House Democrats on Right to Choose
Date: Thursday, September 2, 2021 1:31:47 PM

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Sept. 2, 2021

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Statements by Florida House Democrats on Right to Choose

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Florida House Democrats issued the following statements in response to some members of the Florida Legislature looking to replicate Texas' archaic heartbeat abortion bill.

"It's outrageous to think about prioritizing removing a woman's right in deciding what's best for her health. Right now, we desperately need to fix the severely broken employment system, continue providing relief from the onset of COVID, and we must release federal dollars to programs Floridians need to keep food on the table, their lights on, and a roof over their head. Let's actually work on things Floridians desperately need today," said **Co-Leader Evan Jenne (D-Hollywood)**.

"The data show that the abortion rate has reduced, especially since passage of the ACA and the expansion of health care access. A real solution would be providing universal access to tools like sex education, health care, and contraception so that fewer women need an abortion in the first place. Florida's leaders are all about zero prevention and unlimited distraction instead of solving actual problems. In case it hasn't been noticed, the real emergency is the preventable death and destruction of the COVID-19 pandemic that is causing needless suffering in our state. Let's put a pause on these politricks of distraction and focus on keeping our children and women safe and healthy as they navigate through this pandemic," said **Leader Pro Tempore Kamia Brown (D-Ocoee)**.

"This is a dark day for reproductive freedom but we must remain vigilant at every level of government in our efforts to protect bodily autonomy. Congress needs to act immediately to protect abortion access, Americans needs to vote anti-reproductive care politicians out of office, and we need to stay focused on directly impacted people -- folks who need to end a pregnancy but don't have the resources to do it on their own. The reality is, those with means will always be able to end a pregnancy. It is those who are already marginalized, those with limited resources that will suffer the harshest consequences of this draconian and offensive law.

"Before I ran for office I served as the Senior Director of Public Affairs and Communications at Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida. And before that I was a Planned Parenthood patient seeking access to reproductive care. These issues are deeply personal for me -- and as we wait for the U.S. Supreme Court to hear arguments on another anti-abortion law this fall, I want Floridians to know that we are steadfast and focused on

pushing back against these same extreme attacks right here in the Sunshine State,” said **Representative Anna V. Eskamani (D-Orlando)**.

“As a mother to two daughters and as a woman who was faced with the painful choice of terminating a much wanted pregnancy due to fetal abnormalities, I am mortified by the recent Texas law. Although the decision was taken out of my hands when the pregnancy terminated itself, I am grateful to have had this choice. It is incomprehensible that the Texas legislature would force victims of rape and incest to have an unwanted pregnancy. No one would want that for their daughter. This is a draconian law that extinguishes a woman’s right to make decisions about her body. The Texas Legislature argues against masks mandates on the basis of personal freedom and the right to govern your body, yet they have no problem stripping a woman’s personal freedom. Instead of focusing on partisan bills that divide us, we need to address the needs of our state,” said **Representative Robin Bartleman (D-Weston)**.

“The US leads the developed world in maternal and infant mortality. For Black women, the maternal death rate is nearly four times higher. We need access to all aspects of health care that is safe, with the freedom to make decisions with our doctors not the government. The forced-birth movement has nothing to do with saving women’s lives or protecting our families. It’s rooted in a dark history of white supremacy and the exploitation of Black bodies. We will not stand for this in Florida,” said **Representative Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville)**.

“We have been warning about the consequences of a politicized supreme court when there was still time to change course. Now, the decision to allow the oppressive Texas anti-abortion laws to stand is putting lives in jeopardy and setting a dangerous path that other right-leaning state legislatures will follow in a desperate and shameful attempt to rile up their bases and stay in power. A woman's right to choose must be protected and we in Florida must stay vigilant so that this wave of barbaric and unconstitutional chaos does not reach our shores,” said **Representative Michele Rayner (D-St. Petersburg)**.

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