

From: [Arellano, Joey](#)
To: [FLHouseDems](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FL House Democrats on Legislature Passing Near-Total Abortion Ban
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023 4:51:14 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2023

CONTACT

Joey Arellano
Deputy Communications Director
House Democratic Caucus
Joey.Arellano@myfloridahouse.gov
850-717-4943

Florida House Democrats on Legislature Passing Near-Total Abortion Ban

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida House passed the 6-week abortion ban in a marathon Session, with seven GOP Representatives recognizing the importance of bodily autonomy and voting against passing this near-total abortion ban. Florida House Democrats provided the following statements.

“This is a dark day for our state. Women in Ron DeSantis’ Florida are now less safe and will be forced to live under what effectively will be an outright abortion ban. As we said over and over, six weeks is before most women even know they’re pregnant, and it’s long before many tests for the viability, safety, and health of both the mother and fetus.

“To be clear, this is being pushed by an out-of-touch minority with more power here in the Capitol than back home in our communities, and they want to decide what we can and cannot do with our bodies. The majority of us here in Florida want the right to an abortion protected.

“This incredibly personal decision regarding heart and home should be between a woman and her doctor, family, and faith. She does not need Tallahassee politicians invading her right to privacy and taking that right away,” said **Leader Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa)**.

“By passing this ban today, the state of Florida confirms that it does not trust women to make their own decisions. This abortion ban is not only dangerous, but it discriminates against women and those who seek reproductive healthcare, because abortion IS healthcare. Every Floridian has the right to make their own personal healthcare decisions and to live their lives in dignity, free from political interference,” said **Representative Kelly Skidmore (D-Boca Raton)**.

“This is a de-facto abortion ban since most women don’t even know they are pregnant at 6 weeks. This bill does not take into account the different circumstances women face when they are pregnant, and the debate surrounding this bill is riddled with judgement of women, their circumstances, and their choices. We talk about being a free state and this is literally the antithesis of that. As a woman, it is incredibly disheartening to see our rights and choices be limited in this way,” said **Representative Christine Hunschofsky (D-Parkland)**.

“The passage of HB 7 today sets a dangerous precedent for women all over Florida. We are putting people’s lives at risk for the sake of scoring political points. We are often told that this is the “free state of Florida”. Freedom means choices, and we just took that away today,” said **Representative Dianne Hart (D-Tampa)**.

“There is no question that the 6-Week Abortion Ban Bill the House passed will hurt, and even kill, pregnant women. Pregnancy requires close medical attention and care; the United States has the HIGHEST maternal mortality rate among developed nations. We as elected officials should be directing our efforts to pass legislation that will help lower the maternal mortality rates. We should not be coercing women into unwanted pregnancies, especially when our state also lacks the infrastructure to adequately help families of all backgrounds and this legislature continuously refuses to expand access to resources for families. Every living person deserves the right to be healthy, prosperous, and safe. It is sickening to see our state roll back the hard-fought rights of women making choices about their body. I am saddened that our girls will have fewer rights than I had growing up, thanks in part to the work of Republican men, who will never get pregnant themselves but had so much to say on the topic in debate. I commit to fighting for women’s reproductive health rights today and every day,” said **Representative Susan L. Valdés (D-Tampa)**.

“To the women in Florida, I stand with you and I grieve with you. The State legislature has no business regulating anyone's body. This ban is a violation of privacy and dignity.

I am devastated by what the women in the State of Florida lost today. Our daughters, sisters, and friends deserve so much more and need to be free in making decisions to be truly free in the State of Florida,” said **Representative Marie P. Woodson (D-Hollywood)**.

“As one of two Democratic women representing multiple rural counties in the Florida House, reproductive health care is an incredibly important issue to me and my constituents. Florida’s rural women do not have reliable access to maternity health care. In fact, one of my two new rural counties have no doctors and no hospital. Even the health department does not have physicians who have visited regularly since COVID. Further, in this 13-county region, there are only 3 maternal infant specialists, all located in Tallahassee which can require up to a 2-hour drive. Women across this state, but disproportionately so people in rural counties, face unimaginable consequences when it comes to living with choices made for them by politicians,” said **Representative Allison Tant (D-Tallahassee)**.

“Abortion is health care. Abortion is health care. Abortion is health care. Today we witnessed an unprecedented attack on our inalienable rights. People are suffering and will continue to suffer under this new ruling. Women are losing autonomy to their own bodies in the free State of Florida. I am terribly concerned about the control this state is taking over every essential element of our lives by the actions of this Legislature. We are on the right side of history. We will not give up,” said **Representative Yvonne Hinson (D-Gainesville)**.

“Access to safe abortions is fundamental to reproductive health care and should stay that way in order to protect our women from harm. The ability to make that choice, to raise a child in a safe and healthy environment is paramount. Especially in the free State of Florida.

“If the Republicans continue to promote their dangerous, extremist agenda, which is out of touch with the majority of Americans on this issue, the Legislature will be back in this chamber to find a solution to deal with drastic healthcare and criminal recourse of this political stunt by Ron DeSantis. This rhetoric by my colleagues that this legislation will protect children is a lie when the exact opposite being put forth is this bill jeopardizing the health and safety of women and birthing people in Florida.

“The same faith extremists use to weaponize abortion, is reinforcing my commitment to do everything in my power to protect families, keep the government out of our personal decisions, and fight this legislation to create safer solutions for healthcare and abortion access in Florida. I vow to continue to fight for the ability to make choices for their bodies,” said **Representative Michele K. Rayner-Goolsby (D-St. Petersburg)**.

“Far too many Black women face pregnancy as a death sentence. Forced birth while slashing funding and support for children and families is backwards. No matter who we are, every one of us deserves the right and the freedom to make own decisions about our health care, including reproductive care without state interference. It’s not the role of ambitious politicians to get in the way of our personal medical decisions that are our own to make,” said **Representative Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville)**.

“Today, the Republican supermajority passed a 6-week abortion ban making it virtually impossible for any Floridian to get an abortion. This bad policy puts every woman at unnecessary risk when the decision should be left between her, her family, and her doctor. This bill is nothing more than another dangerous stunt to advance the political career of one Florida Governor and marks a disgraceful moment in history for the so-called 'free state of Florida,’” said **Representative Dan Daley (D-Coral Springs)**.

Representative Felicia Robinson (D-Miami Gardens) said, “This bill makes the Florida Legislature look hypocritical! When it comes to guns we are pro-choice. When it comes to education we are pro-choice. But when it comes to a woman’s reproductive freedom we become dictators in a space that is very personal and private. God does not force humanity to obey, unlike the Florida Legislature, He grants free-will, because God is PRO-CHOICE. Today I am saddened and disgusted by

the robbery of women's reproductive freedom in Florida.”

“SB 300 is a gross overreach and infringement of Florida women's right to privacy and to make the choices that are right for their health and the well-being of their families,” said **Representative Daryl Campbell (D-Fort Lauderdale)**. “Every year we come back to further restrictions, against doctors' recommendations. They are forcing women to go to extreme measures for the right to decide about their own body. When will the respect for a woman's right be valued? This has never been about where life begins. It is about a legislature led by a male majority, implementing laws controlling women. This bill aims to create a Florida where women do not own the rights to their body, where is the FREEDOM in that? I cannot imagine raising a daughter in a world where she will have to fight for simple bodily autonomy.

“Shame on the Florida Legislature for taking away the right for women in Florida to have a safeguard from abortion without burdensome restrictions.

“Women in Florida have had the right to obtain a safe and legal abortions without restrictions for 50 years after the *Roe v. Wade* ruling by the United States Supreme Court. The residents of Florida don't ask the Florida Legislature to impose harsh and burdensome restrictions on women.

“I'm concerned about my daughter and her friends and the daughters of my friends that may need to have an abortion for whatever reason. Shame on the Florida Legislature,” said **Representative Bruce Antone (D-Orlando)**.

“I am a Christian and cannot believe that some of my colleagues have attempted to rationalize their radical beliefs in the name of God. The legislative majority has asserted their interpretation of the Bible to justify an unjustifiable abortion ban. We are living in the supposed “free state of Florida,” in a nation that prides itself on democracy and not dictatorship.

“Not every Floridian is a Christian and this legislature is not guided by the Bible. Personal beliefs can influence personal decisions, but they should not be imposed on the more than 10 million people who will be personally impacted by this bill.

“SB 300 will kill people. When bans like these go into effect, abortions do not stop, they just become unsafe. Since when is it okay to prioritize a personal agenda over the health and well-being of Floridians? Now, that is what's not Christian,” said **Representative Johanna López (D-Orlando)**.

“I am disappointed in the direction our state is taking. When we took our oath of office we make a commitment to be a mouth piece for our constituents, not a pawn for special interest groups. Every vote I make on this floor is in the best interest of those who call district 40 home. This is why I voted no. Because black women will always be more negatively impacted than the affluent and wealthy who won't have this issue. It's very ironic that we cast a vote to restrict at greater levels women's access to healthcare IN Black Maternity Mortality Month.

“I’m disappointed because those members who voted on behalf of this, told me today that my health doesn’t matter. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, the examination room is too small for the woman, her family, her doctors, the governor and government to fit, so Mr. Governor and your friends, see your way to the waiting room. We have to continue to fight and stand with women,” said **Representative LaVon Bracy Davis (D-Ocoee)**.

Representative Waldron (D-Wellington) said, “My Republican colleagues have historically called themselves the party of small government. However, it seems that many of my Republican colleagues have chosen the opposite of this. These same individuals have pushed their narrative, in the form of big government, into our classrooms to tell us what our children can and cannot read; into our bathrooms with their strange obsession with the LGBTQ+ community; into the kitchen to tell SNAP participants how they should nourish themselves and now they are in our bedrooms -- unfairly, unjustly and without conscience, taking away decisions about women’s health and her body. This Republican subordination of people’s individual interests and liberties in this manner, is the very definition of fascism. They are taking away our freedoms while proclaiming that we live in a free state. The hypocrisy cannot escape these Republicans and history will not look back on them kindly.”

"The passing of SB 300 is a disservice to the women of Florida. Many constituents have expressed that this bill takes away autonomy from women to make decisions regarding their own bodies. This legislature has passed a finite decision on what a woman can do with her body when there are infinite possibilities in which pregnancy can be derived. This ban is a horrendous overreach of government control and exhibits a purpose of flexing power 'because [they] can.' We should be offering the opportunity of freedom and free will for all women and citizens instead of being restrictive," said **Representative Lisa Dunkley (D-Sunrise)**.

“Today, the Republican Party showed they are anti-woman, anti-freedom, and anti-choice. Women in Florida will have fewer rights under this bill than they did before. That’s unacceptable, and women know it. They’ll make their voices heard at the ballot boxes and in the streets, and this caucus will be with them every step of the way,” said **Representative Lindsay Cross (D-St. Petersburg)**.

"This is a very important issue that severely limits women's reproductive choices. This bill simply does not protect a woman's right to choose by expanding the circumstances under when an abortion can be performed. A woman's right to make healthcare decisions should not be forced by anyone. Every citizen deserves access to vital and lifesaving healthcare. As legislators, we are responsible for standing against ideological attempts that threaten women's access to abortion health care. I'll continue to protect individuals' freedoms so that health decisions can remain between the patients and their health providers," said **Representative Gallop Franklin II (D-Tallahassee)**.

“This bill is violating. It violates women’s bodies; it violates women’s health and safety; it violates women’s privacy; and it violates women’s faiths. For government to get in the way of making choices for her body is nothing short of a blatant invasion of

privacy. When government decides it can tell women what they can do with their body, it makes women second-class citizens. It is difficult to put into words how barbaric a 6-week ban is. Six weeks is before many even know they are expecting. Women are already being harmed because of last year's 15-week abortion ban; this year's Forced Pregnancy Act will only make things worse. We will continue to fight for all women and their ability to freely make choices about their body—free from government overreach,” said **Representative Hillary Cassel (D-Dania Beach)**.

“This bill is an affront to every notion of freedom and sovereignty in this county and state. This bill puts women in the class as second-class citizens who do not have complete sovereignty over their body. There is not one piece of legislation that tells a man what he can or cannot do with this body so this bill essentially tells women that we are not capable of making the best decision for our bodies and lives,” said **Representative Ashley V. Gantt (D-Miami)**.

“There are people in this state who are pregnant right now. There are those who don't even know they are pregnant. These folks who don't know there will be complications. This bill is a death sentence for them.

“My constituents didn't ask for this ban. They asked us to deal with issues like property insurance, which is still skyrocketing. These are the discussions we need to have, not taking away freedoms,” said **Representative Rita Harris (D-Orlando)**.

###