

Thousands of women march across U.S. in support of abortion rights

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Women protest after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures [Caitlin Ochs/Reuters]

Washington, October 3 (RHC)-- Marches have been held across the United States as part of nationwide protests to demand continued access to abortion after conservative lawmakers and judges put

reproductive rights in jeopardy.

Thousands of women filled a square near the White House for a rally before the march on Saturday, waving signs that said “Mind your own uterus” and “Abortion is a personal choice, not a legal debate.”

“I have two daughters here and I want them to have control over their lives later when they grow up, so it’s really important to come out here and not let this madness let out of hand,” a protester told Al Jazeera.

Elaine Baijal, a 19-year-old student at American University, told The Associated Press news agency that her mother took part in a march for legal abortion in the 1970s. “It’s sad that we still have to fight for our rights 40 years later. But it’s a tradition I want to continue,” she said.

The protests come a month after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to block a Texas law that banned abortions once a heartbeat is detected at about six weeks, which is before some women know they are pregnant. Protesters gathering in Austin, the Texas capital, and other cities around the state, said they saw the ban as unconstitutional and feared it could be extended to more U.S. states.

The Supreme Court in Mississippi is set to hear a case in December that could overturn Roe v Wade, a landmark 1973 case that gave American women the right to abortion.

Should Roe v Wade be overturned, 26 states out of 50 are primed to ban abortion. The appointment of justices under former President Donald Trump has strengthened conservative control of the high court.

Marchers chanted “Shame, shame, shame!” while walking past the Trump International Hotel on their way to the Supreme Court in Washington, DC.

Current President Joe Biden on Friday urged a federal judge to block the abortion ban in Texas, which came into effect early in September.

Abortion providers can be sued for giving services to women beyond the first six weeks. Some providers have described Texas clinics that are now in danger of closing while neighbouring states struggle to keep up with a surge of patients who must drive hundreds of miles. Other women, they say, are being forced to carry pregnancies to term.

A number of states, mostly in the south, have passed similar laws that ban abortion within the early weeks of pregnancy, all of which have been blocked in court.

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