

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Morgan Griffith
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations Hearing
“Roe Reversal: The Impacts of Taking Away the Constitutional Right to an
Abortion”
July 19, 2022
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chair DeGette.

It is important that we not lose sight of the extreme and inhumane direction started by *Roe v. Wade*. *Roe* was a constitutional error that produced decades of tragedy.

Just three years ago, in my home commonwealth of Virginia, an abortion bill introduced in the House of Delegates caused an uproar when the sponsor admitted that the bill would legalize abortion in the final moments before birth if the abortionist asserted it was necessary for the mother’s mental health. Adding fuel to the fire, prominent elected officials made public comments indicating that they were fine refusing treatment to a child born alive, even if the refusal to treat the child could result in his or her death. It is inconceivable that a baby born alive, even if it is after an attempted abortion, should not have the same rights as any other newborn.

This is just one example of how some abortion supporters have failed to acknowledge the humanity of an unborn child or even a child born alive after a failed abortion, however rare that may be.

As a strong supporter of the right to life, I welcome the *Dobbs* opinion. The Supreme Court got the law right in *Dobbs*. The majority opinion made a well-reasoned

and persuasive argument that *Roe* took power out of the hands of the people and the legislators. The Court has restored democracy to this issue.

Unsurprisingly, the *Dobbs* decision has been used to stoke fear about the consequences of reversing *Roe*, portraying its reversal as an undoing of women's rights generally.

But this argument ignores the numerous laws and court cases with no relation to *Roe* protecting women today. Major civil rights laws were enacted a few years before *Roe* that protected women from discrimination in employment, education, housing, and federally funded activities, among other areas. These laws predated *Roe*, have no basis in it, and would not be affected by its reversal.

The bleak depiction of the future for women painted by abortion supporters simply defies the progress made by women wholly apart from *Roe*, and it also ignores the tragic consequences of abortion—the taking of a human life.

The Biden administration's scare tactics over *Dobbs* also extends to using federal power to bully medical professionals. Last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced it was reminding tens of thousands of pharmacies around the country that they risk violating civil rights laws if they refuse to fill orders for abortion medication.¹ Two of the largest pharmacist

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Guidance to Nation's Retail Pharmacies: Obligations under Federal Civil Rights Laws to Ensure Access to Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care Services (July 14, 2022), available at <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/special-topics/reproductive-healthcare/pharmacies-guidance/index.html>.

associations have criticized the guidance for undermining the pharmacist-patient relationship and adding more confusion to the legal and regulatory landscape.²

Our task going forward from this decision is to carry on the hard but necessary work of building a culture that protects, respects, and cherishes life.

It is important for those of us who call ourselves pro-life to support mothers, children, and adoptive families. We have a foundation to build on. According to a report by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, there were more than 2,700 pregnancy help centers nationwide in 2019, providing free and low-cost services to millions of people annually.³ These centers provide help and alternatives to abortion. More than 800,000 lives were saved at pregnancy help centers from 2016 to 2020.⁴ In addition, the federal government offers programs to aid adoptive families.

It's time for our country to move on from the grave constitutional and moral error of *Roe* and make progress on fulfilling the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness endowed to all—born and unborn.

² See ASHP Response and Advocacy Related to Recent Federal Guidance to “Retail Pharmacies” on Access to Reproductive Health, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (July 14, 2022), *available at* **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**<https://www.ashp.org/news/2022/07/14/response-to-federal-guidance-on-access-to-reproductive-health?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>; New Federal Guidance confuses an already complicated landscape for pharmacists, American Pharmacists Association (July 13, 2022), *available at* **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**<https://pharmacist.com/APhA-Press-Releases/new-federal-guidance-confuses-an-already-complicated-landscape-for-pharmacists>.

³ Pregnancy centers and the test of time, Charlotte Lozier Institute (2020), *available at* https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pregnancy-Center-Report-2020_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ Moira Gaul, M.P.H. and Jeanneane Maxon, J.D., *Lives saved impact at U.S. pregnancy help centers*, Charlotte Lozier Institute (June 23, 2022), *available at* <https://lozierinstitute.org/lives-saved-impact-at-us-pregnancy-help-centers/>.

[I thank the witnesses for being here today, but I am disappointed that the majority has denied us more than one witness for this hearing on such a major topic, particularly for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. I understand the practice is for the majority to get most of the witnesses for a hearing, but to stack a panel 5 to 1 like this does not allow for a more balanced, fact-finding panel—particularly on such an important issue.]

Regardless, I thank all the witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to being part of this important discussion. I yield back.