

Mobilize the working class to oppose the attack on abortion rights!

Statement of the Socialist Equality Party (US)

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The Socialist Equality Party denounces the US Supreme Court's imminent decision to reverse the 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* and overturn the right to an abortion.

The opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, will have an immediate and devastating impact on millions of workers, particularly working-class women who do not have the ability to travel from states that ban abortion to states that allow it. The decision exposes the lie that the US government is intervening in Ukraine to defend "democracy" and "human rights." In reality, the American ruling class is engaged in massive attacks on the democratic rights of the population of its own country.

The *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 was the last gasp of a brief 20-year period of Supreme Court rulings made under the pressure of the growth of working-class struggle, the mass civil rights movement and the general leftward swing of politics produced by the opposition to the Vietnam War. The decision itself was a belated acknowledgement that the right to an abortion is an essential democratic right, connected both to the right to privacy and the separation of church and state.

The attack on the decision came to be a hallmark for the reactionary trajectory of American politics over the past half century. Through a series of state and federal legislative actions and court decisions, particularly over the past two decades, the right to an abortion has been vastly undermined. The official overturning of the decision in *Roe* is seen as the final nail in the coffin.

Without legal access to abortion, working-class women, without the resources or ability to take off work to travel across state lines, will be forced to resort to the unsafe and potentially deadly methods of the past. Encouraged by the Supreme Court, fascistic state legislators and governors will go on the offensive,

encouraging, as in Texas, vigilante action against abortion providers and even prosecuting individuals for going to other states to have an abortion.

Beyond the right to an abortion, a Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe* will open the door for a frontal assault on a whole series of established democratic rights known as "unenumerated rights" because they were not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Constitution, which was ratified in 1788. Alito's position, that there is no right to an abortion because it was not in the original Bill of Rights, can be applied just as well to every other right established over the course of the development of modern society, including the right to a public defender, the abolition of anti-miscegenation laws, bans on mandatory prayer in schools, and the right to gay marriage.

The right-wing cabal pushing the decision is now denouncing the fact that the draft decision was leaked. Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell declared Tuesday that the person responsible should be prosecuted. Chief Justice John Roberts called the leak "a betrayal of the confidences of the court." What a contemptible fraud! What upsets McConnell and Roberts is that the conspiracy behind closed doors against the democratic rights of the American people has been exposed.

The extreme-right faction of the political establishment is well aware that a decision to overturn the right to an abortion is massively unpopular. A CNN report in January found that 69 percent of the population is opposed to overturning *Roe*. The decision is openly contemptuous of the democratic aspirations of the masses of people. It states, "We cannot allow our decisions to be affected by any extraneous influences such as concern about the public's reaction to our work."

For their part, the Democrats have responded to Alito's draft ruling by calling for voters to elect more Democrats. "At the federal level, we need more pro-choice senators and a pro-choice majority in the House to adopt legislation that codifies *Roe*," President Biden declared Tuesday, "which I will work to pass and sign into law." Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said that he would hold a vote in the Senate on abortion rights legislation.

This is absurd and empty posturing. The Democratic Party controls two of the three branches of government and just won 80 million votes in the last presidential election, but it is proposing legislation that it knows will never pass and which they have refused to pass for half a century since *Roe* was decided. Schumer himself acknowledged that a vote in the Senate on abortion rights would fail.

In other words, the Democrats will do nothing, even though every election year for the past half-century the Democratic Party has proclaimed that workers and youth had to support them in order to prevent the Supreme Court from overturning *Roe*.

The Democratic Party, as the Socialist Equality Party has often noted, is the graveyard of social protest. It is, moreover, a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, deeply hostile to the working class and its democratic rights, opposed to anything that threatens to cut across its effort to forge a "national unity" behind the war drive against Russia.

As for the privileged layers of the upper-middle class that the Democratic Party mobilizes on the basis of racial and gender politics, the more the question of abortion became a class issue, the more indifferent they were to its defense.

The move to overturn *Roe v. Wade* is driven by a right-wing cabal of justices that now dominates the court, including Clarence Thomas, whose wife, Virginia, was in continuous contact with the Trump administration in the run-up to the attempted coup of January 6, 2021. Three of the justices—Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett—were appointed by Trump, with the Democrats offering no serious resistance.

The very fact that this group of right-wing conspirators has come to dominate the court is an expression of the undemocratic character of the entire political system. In the history of notorious Supreme

Court rulings, the move to overturn *Roe* can be compared to the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857, which confirmed in the minds of abolitionists that the government had come under the control of the "Slave Power"; the decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896, which upheld racial segregation laws; and, more recently, the decision in *Bush v. Gore* to halt the recounting of ballots in the 2000 election and hand the election to George W. Bush.

The *Bush v. Gore* decision was a milestone in the disintegration of bourgeois democracy in the United States. In the course of the ruling, the Supreme Court proclaimed that the population has no right to vote for the president. The theft of an election, and the refusal of the Democratic Party to mount any opposition to it, demonstrated that there exists no significant constituency in the ruling class for the defense of the most basic democratic rights.

There is a profound connection between the assault on democratic rights and the massive growth of social inequality, unrestrained militarism, and the destruction for all practical purposes of a labor movement. The abolition of the right to an abortion epitomizes the protracted disintegration of bourgeois democracy in the United States, which has become nothing more than a hollow shell.

The defense of the democratic right to an abortion is fundamentally a class question. It can be defended only as part of a movement for the social and political mobilization of the working class as an independent force. To believe that opposition will be mounted through the Democratic Party is the height of absurdity.

The Socialist Equality Party supports and encourages mass protests and demonstrations against the Supreme Court ruling to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. However, the defense of the democratic right to an abortion, as with all democratic rights, must be connected to the growing struggles of workers against exploitation, the soaring costs of goods, social inequality, imperialist war and the capitalist profit system.



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