

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer,

We write today with renewed urgency regarding the filibuster and the ability of the 117th Congress to work toward a future where all of us are free to make personal decisions, without political interference. When *Roe v. Wade* was decided almost fifty years ago, the courts made it unequivocally clear that access to safe and legal abortion is a constitutional right. This decision has given people safer access to abortion services and contraception, and has helped make America a beacon of hope. However, after decades of attacks on abortion rights, the recent draft opinion by the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* not only endangers millions of people and families – it also shows us that we can no longer rely on the courts to protect these fundamental rights. We must codify the right to abortion access through federal legislation, and we cannot allow the filibuster to stand in the way.

A majority of voters believe that everyone should have access to the full range of reproductive health care, including annual screenings, birth control, pregnancy tests, and abortion services - regardless of where they live.¹ But hundreds of state-level laws restricting and banning abortion services have made it extremely difficult for many people, despite constitutional protections. In 2021, anti-abortion lawmakers introduced over 500 restrictive laws in 44 state legislatures that make abortion difficult and, sometimes, impossible to access.² These policies are in direct conflict with major medical associations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association, who affirm that abortion is essential health care that should not be burdened by medically unnecessary restrictions that harm patients.³

If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, we know that the ensuing laws will not affect Americans equitably. Like so many times in America's past, they will disproportionately harm low-income people and people of color, who already face barriers to healthcare. Research shows that being denied an abortion has serious consequences for a woman's health, well-being, and financial security; women denied abortion care are at increased risk of experiencing intimate partner violence, health problems, poverty, and ongoing financial

1 <https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/poll-finding/kff-poll-public-opinion-and-knowledge-on-reproductive-health-policy/>

2 <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/report-details-wave-state-legislative-attempts-restrict-abortion-2021-n1262070>

3 <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/unconstitutional-attack-reproductive-health-must-not-stand;>
<https://www.acog.org/clinical-information/policy-and-position-statements/position-statements/2018/restrictions-to-comprehensive-reproductive-health-care#:~:text=ACOG%20recognizes%20that%20access%20to,jeopardize%20women's%20health%20and%20safety.>

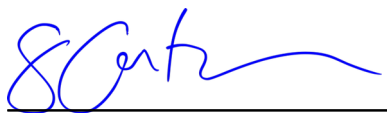
distress, including rising debt and eviction proceedings.⁴ The elimination of abortion restrictions is essential to the pursuit of reproductive, economic, and racial justice.

When voters gave Democrats control of the House, Senate, and the White House, they did so with the expectation that we would legislate boldly and do what is necessary to advance our fight for justice and economic prosperity. Now more than ever it is the time to deliver on our promises. We applaud you for your commitment to bring the Women's Health Protection Act to the Senate floor for a vote again. However, we are not naive to the fact that the filibuster's 60 vote requirement will continue to stall this paramount legislation - just as it has stalled the path forward in the fight for voting rights, climate and environmental justice, gun violence prevention, immigration reform, worker protections, LGBTQ equality, and criminal justice reform. The Senate must meet the moment, end the filibuster, and pass the Women's Health Protection Act immediately.

This is not the first time many in Congress have called for the elimination of the filibuster, but each day that we allow this tool to remain in place, we see the catastrophic threat it presents to our constituents, our families, and our friends. *Roe* has been the law of the land for almost fifty years, and basic fairness and the stability of our law demand that it not be overturned.⁵ As we wait for the final decision from the Supreme Court of the United States, it is time for Congress to protect abortion rights and access with the Women's Health Protection Act. Passing this legislation is a critical step toward creating a world where every person - regardless of who they are or where they are from - is free to make the best health care decisions for themselves, their families, and their lives.

We must legislate towards a better, more just America, and that requires us to do what is necessary to deliver for the communities that we represent. Thank you for your leadership during this critical moment for our country, and we look forward to continued partnership in our work for the people.

Sincerely,



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Cori Bush
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/lifelong-consequences-what-happens-people-who-can-t-get-abortions-n1278838><https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/lifelong-consequences-what-happens-people-who-can-t-get-abortions-n1278838>

⁵ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/03/statement-by-president-joe-biden-4/>



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Co-Chair, Pro-Choice
Caucus
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Diana DeGette
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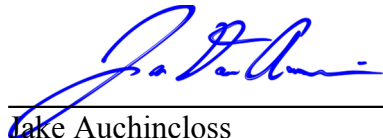
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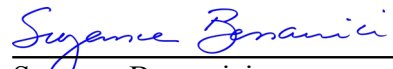
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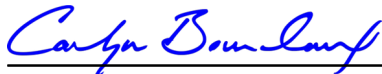
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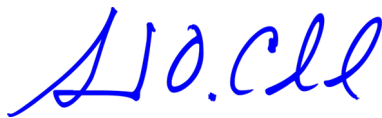
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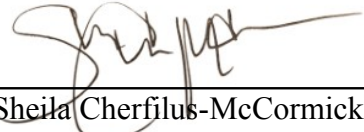
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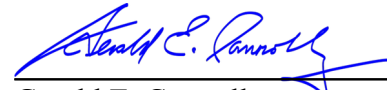
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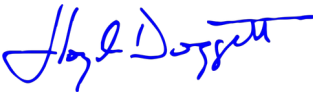
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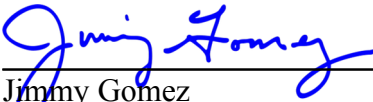
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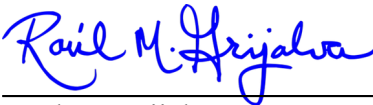
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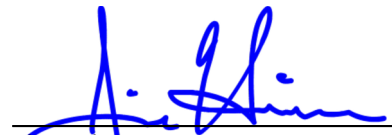
Jimmy Gomez
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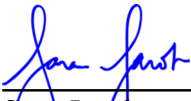
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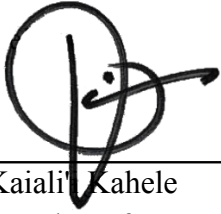
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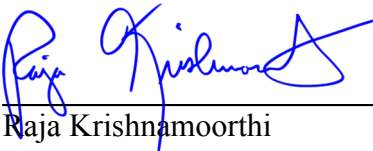
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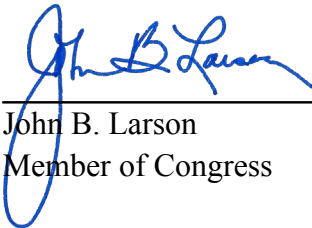
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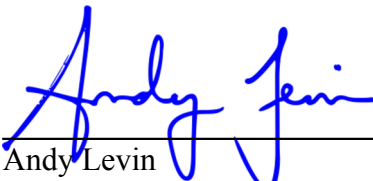
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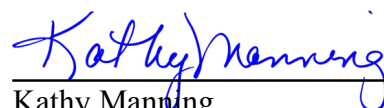
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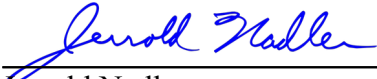
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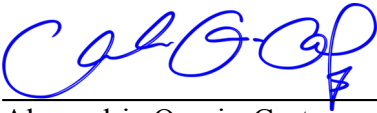
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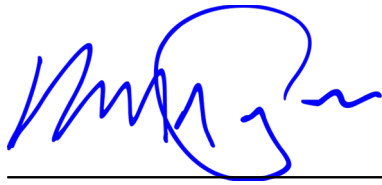
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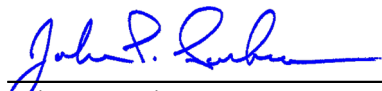
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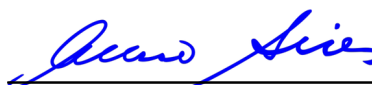
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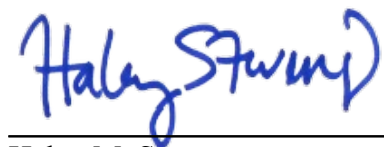
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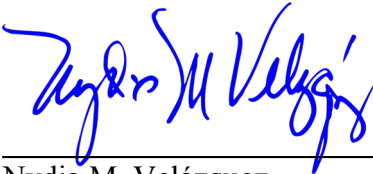
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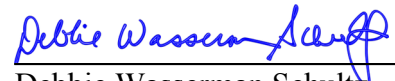
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