

## **Reversal of Roe vs. Wade Devastating Impact on Latina Health**

*Court's Decision is a Blow to Health and Wellness of Women of Color*

### **Joint Statement**

#### **Illinois Latino Agenda 2.0 and Illinois Unidos**

(July 1, 2022 - Chicago) - Last week, the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade, which has protected the right to abortion nationally since 1973. This decision will devastate people of color, their families, and their communities. Latina and Black women and pregnant individuals will bear the brunt of this reversal. In 2019, Latinas were 80 percent more likely to receive late or no prenatal care than White women, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Recently published data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications and twice as likely to lose an infant to premature death. Alarming CDC data detail that maternal mortality rates for U.S. Latinas and Black women are at an all time high, the overall rate was 23.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, an increase from a rate of 20.1 in 2019. These data shed light on the shortcomings of a public health system that has failed women of color.

Dr. Melissa Simon, co-chair of Illinois Unidos' Health & Policy Committee shared, "Women of color will bear the brunt of this decision. We know from decades of research that the impact will fall hardest on those who already struggle to access health care, including reproductive health and abortions. Even when Roe vs. Wade was the rule of law, the right to affordable and accessible reproductive health care services, including abortion, only existed on paper for women of color and those in poverty who don't have access to health care."

Women of color will bear the burden of this decision. It is already difficult for women of color to access affordable health services, including safe resources. This decision turns back time and will clearly impact more than just women. The legalization of abortion in 1973 increased women's labor force participation<sup>1</sup>. Working and poor women seeking abortions will have the hardest time traveling to distant parts of the nation to terminate pregnancies or struggle raising children they might struggle to afford. Women who cannot access abortion care "...face significant financial distress, including higher amounts of debt and increased rates of bankruptcy and eviction," according to a working paper published last week by the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#).<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. is also home to people who are from or trace their roots to more than 20 nations that form the Latin American and Caribbean regions. This decision will undoubtedly have an impact on global abortion access, including in Latin America and the Caribbean, where several countries have decriminalized abortion, including Argentina, Cuba, Guyana, Mexico, Chile,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ideas.repec.org/a/tra/jlabre/v25y2004i3p503-514.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-happens-to-women-who-cant-get-abortion\\_n\\_5e30bedec5b693878a8822e6](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-happens-to-women-who-cant-get-abortion_n_5e30bedec5b693878a8822e6)

Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. This reversal could have a ripple effect in these and other countries where women's health is already at risk.

Some will attempt to rationalize the recent decision by aligning it closely with Latino values. However, Latino culture is also rooted in a defined struggle for agency and community care, self-determination, independence, and basic rights. This assumption and generalization ignore the fact that, according to the National Institute on Latina Reproductive Justice, a substantial number of Latinos believe this to be a private matter between a woman and her physician or care provider.

Illinois is a safe harbor for women seeking abortions and reproductive health care, but women in every state need and deserve access to safe, accessible, and affordable health care. We thank Governor J.B. Pritzker for his leadership and commitment to firmly protect women's reproductive rights and the health care and abortion providers in Illinois. We look forward to collective efforts across the state to expand those protections and continue to serve as a refuge to women and pregnant individuals needing those services.

### **About the Illinois Latino Agenda 2.0 and Illinois Unidos**

**The ILA 2.0** is a non-partisan coalition that works to advance the economic, political, and social prosperity of the Latino community. For more information on the coalition, please visit <https://www.latinopolicyforum.org/issues/leadership/ila>.

**Illinois Unidos** is a statewide consortium of Latino-led organizations, medical and health professionals, and civic leaders formed to address the COVID19 pandemic in the Latino community. IL Unidos continues to promote health equity, inclusion, and voice, through public policy advocacy, civic engagement, and community leadership. For more information on Illinois Unidos, please visit <http://illinoisunidos.com>.

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