

Insights from Clinic Administrator on Dobbs Decision and Aftermath

|
Sara Segal, School of Science & Engineering, '24

[View PDF](#)



August 5, 2022

This article was originally published in [ReproNews, Issue 47, August 2022](#).

“It’s almost like a bad dream,” said Sylvia Cochran, President of Women’s Health Care Center and Delta Clinic of Baton Rouge, when asked about the overturning of Roe v Wade. Cochran has been involved with the Delta Clinic since 1978 as an employee and then administrator. She currently serves as the president of Delta Clinic of Baton Rouge and Women’s Health Care Center in New Orleans, overseeing staffing, compliance, and community outreach. The sister clinics run similarly, but outreach differs due to the more significant numbers of anti-abortion attitudes encountered in the Delta Clinic of Baton Rouge.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to interview Sylvia Cochran about her experience with the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*. We were joined by Amy Irvin, clinic media spokesperson and former executive director of the New Orleans Abortion Fund, to discuss several topics, including the Supreme Court's ruling, contraception, emergency contraception, the role of physicians during this time, and ways to get involved.

Cochran described how she was shocked by the overturning of *Roe* but elaborated that many of the Supreme Court Justices' decisions were expected based on their religious beliefs and political affiliation. We then pivoted the conversation to the pervasive fear felt by women surrounding the status of their reproductive rights going forward and the fear physicians felt regarding the potential consequences of performing future abortions.

There are many different reasons why someone would want to get an abortion. Whether that be interference with school or career, unreadiness for a child or another child, financial difficulties, relationship problems, or health risks, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* changed women's lives significantly. In fact, in a study conducted by the ANSIRH (Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health), women who have abortions are clear about their decision and most commonly report feeling relief — even years later. Along with changing women's lives, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* also affects families. When a woman chooses to have or not have an abortion, they choose in the best interest of their children and their family.

"I think it's gonna get worse until it gets better," Cochran expressed her concern for the generation to come, specifically speaking about her nieces and how they might grow up in a society where getting an abortion might not even be an option. Finally, Cochran, Irvin, and I shared stories of close friends and acquaintances directly affected by this ruling and discussed our concerns going forward.

"Ideally, the biggest priority is for abortion to become legal everywhere," expressed Cochran when asked about her main priority that mitigates harm and pushes back against these decisions. In addition, increased access to a medical doctor, emergency birth control, and free contraception are more changes that Cochran would like to see implemented in order to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies.

The number one thing she shared with me that will help the most during this time is to volunteer. People should not only volunteer and contact their representatives urging for change, but they also should educate themselves and others about the topics of contraception, emergency contraception, and available resources. Even a simple conversation with someone about the nature of our society can make a difference.

“Educate yourself, get organized, and vote!” Cochran expressed when asked about what needs to be done.

Hitting close to home, Louisiana’s abortion ban is positioned to become enforced again. On July 29th, an appeals court ruled that the state must be granted a suspensive appeal while a lawsuit challenging the ban continues to play out in court. The decision is expected to shut down in-state clinics for the third time since the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision last month to end constitutional protections for abortion.

Local organizations such as the [New Orleans Abortion Fund](#) are always looking for donations to push for change. More organizations include [Lift Louisiana](#), [ReJac/Plan B Nola](#), [Women with a Vision](#), and [Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast](#). There are many organizations out there that could use our help, and we must unite to fight for our rights.

To learn more about the impact getting an abortion has on women, visit:

<https://www.ansirh.org/abortion/impact>

To read more about the recent abortion lawsuit decisions, visit:

<https://apnews.com/article/abortion-health-louisiana-lawsuits-government-and-politics-2aee46370d4a236c91a63515e0e0cca2>