



Speak Out Now

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mail@speakoutsocialists.org

speakoutsocialists.org

(510) 343-9105

We Must Fight to Defend Our Right to Choose!

Across the world, women's rights are under attack. This has included a massive legal assault on women's rights throughout the U.S. This year, 561 abortion restrictions, including 165 abortion bans, have been introduced in 47 states. Eighty-three of these restrictions, including ten bans, have been enacted in just 16 states.

The most outrageous of these is the recent Texas ban on abortions after six weeks of gestation (a time when many women are unaware that they are pregnant). The law provides a bounty of up to \$10,000 to anyone who successfully sues someone who helps a woman access an abortion after six weeks of gestation! So a doctor, a clinic that provides abortions, or anyone who supported the woman in this difficult decision can be sued.

These legal attacks are part of a conservative Republican strategy aimed at overturning the 1973 Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision. This decision protects a woman's right to choose. But the Supreme Court only acted because of the powerful women's movement that demanded that women should have the right to control their own bodies. Its passage ended the dilemma a woman faced with an unwanted pregnancy — either be forced to risk her life to have an illegal abortion or to give birth to child that she knew she could not provide for.

Women bear the majority of responsibility for childcare. And many women do this alone. Women make up the largest section of the most essential, precarious, and worst-paying jobs. And on top of this, women in the U.S. still make only 82 cents for every dollar a man earns. This amount is even lower for women of color, transgender, and disabled women.

Women also experienced job losses at a rate 1.8 times higher than men during the pandemic. As a result, single women-headed households are more impoverished than ever. Estimates are that one in four children in the U.S. are living in food insecure households. More than 19 million women lack access to contraception.

Obviously this problem isn't restricted to the U.S. Across the world more than 800 women die every day from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Everywhere women do most of the unpaid work at home. Many women can't work paid jobs because of their unpaid responsibility for caring for children, elders, and sick family members. This unpaid work adds up to \$10.8 trillion per year!

Women around the world also face violence, rape and murder at the hands of men, including men they know. Often these crimes are not reported by the cops or investigated or prosecuted. But women have fought back and refused to accept the abuse, the violence and their lack of equal rights. We have seen recent strikes, and massive mobilizations of women in South America, and Mexico. We have just seen the courageous stance of women in Afghanistan who are refusing to be treated as second class citizens by the Taliban.

The struggle for women's rights is our fight too, regardless of our sex or gender. Today polls show that seven in ten adults in the U.S. support a woman's right to choose. But answering a poll is not enough! Women and their allies all over the U.S. are out in the streets on October 2 to defend that right. We won this right before and to keep it we will need to fight for it again today!