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May 9, 2022

U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members—78 percent of whom are women—we urge you to VOTE YES on the Women’s Health Protection Act (S. 4132) to codify into law the right to reproductive freedom established nearly 50 years ago by the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA’s report card for the 117th Congress.

NEA believes in family planning that includes the right to reproductive freedom. The recently leaked draft of the Supreme Court’s opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* violates that belief. It would overturn *Roe*—“settled law” several justices said, under oath, during their confirmation hearings—as well as *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, threatening reproductive and other fundamental rights.

### **Support for reproductive rights**

NEA develops policies at its Representative Assembly, the largest democratic gathering in the country. Each year, some 9,000 delegates (members elected by their peers) debate and vote on establishing positions. Since 1978, we have supported the right of our members to choose whether to have children and how to have a family. Our official resolution says, “The National Education Association believes in family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom.”

Over the years, NEA has participated in litigation on behalf of members based on *Roe v. Wade*, including the cases of:

- Jeanne Eckmann, a teacher who studied to be a nun, became pregnant as a result of rape, and was fired by her school district for choosing to have a child out of wedlock. (NEA relied on *Roe* to argue that it violated her right to reproductive freedom for the school to fire her for exercising her right not to have an abortion.)
- Linda Littlejohn, a Kentucky member fired for getting a divorce. (The Sixth Circuit agreed with NEA that her firing violated the right established in *Roe* to privacy in matters relating to procreation and marriage.)
- Janice Dike, a Florida member denied the right to breastfeed her baby during her duty-free lunch period. (The Fifth Circuit agreed with NEA in relying on *Roe*’s recognition of a

fundamental right to decide how to nurture and raise children, referring to breastfeeding as the “most elemental form of parental care.”)

NEA has also supported reproductive freedom in amicus filings in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, *Whole Women’s Health v. Hellerstedt*, and the pending *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*.

**Leave decisions to individuals**

Family planning and reproductive health decisions should be left to individuals. Having a child is one of the most important and personal decisions anyone makes—a decision with lifelong consequences for education, health care, employment, and earnings that affect entire families.

If *Roe* is overturned, women will soon lose the right to make that decision—based on their conscience and family considerations—in as many as 28 states. Poor women and women of color will suffer disproportionately due to lack of access to health care and family planning services—the consequences of an unplanned pregnancy can be dire not just for them, but the entire family.

For all these reasons, we urge you to VOTE YES on Women’s Health Protection Act (S. 4132).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca S. Pringle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Rebecca S. Pringle  
President  
National Education Association