

Supreme Court decides to recognize ban on partial-birth abortion

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A recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling to uphold a partial-birth abortion ban has prompted conversation about what new precedents have been set in the debate.

This time, anti-abortion advocates are claiming a major victory. Those opposed to the ruling are expressing concerns about how it affects women's health issues and those rights granted by *Roe v. Wade*.

"It's a landmark setback for women's health," said Laurie Felker Jones, deputy political director at National Abortion

and Reproductive Rights Action League. "For the first time in 35 years almost, we see no protection for women's health."

On Wednesday, in a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President George Bush in 2003 as constitutional despite the lack of an exception in cases in which the health of the mother is in question.

"It gives the green light for organizations to directly challenge *Roe* with no exception for women's health," Jones said.

Though the ban makes an exception when a woman's life is endangered, it does not exclude

health-risking pregnancies.

Jones said the ruling goes against the responsibilities and rights of women in determining what is in their best interests when it comes to pregnancy. Jones said the responsibilities of doctors to act in accordance with what is most beneficial to a woman's wellbeing are adversely affected by the ruling.

Hilary Combs, pre-communication design freshman, supports the ruling.

"I'm glad that this step has been taken towards ending abortion," Combs said. "I don't know why anyone wouldn't be excited about this."

Other students were less convinced.

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"I've had several friends that have had abortions before," said Jasmine Black, mass communication senior. "It does seem, though, that if that child has already been formed it's more like murder. But at the same time I don't like that it's taking away choice."

Partial-birth is not a medical term but is used most by anti-abortion organizations in the legal battle to outlaw the practice. The rare procedure is clinically referred to as "intact dilation and extraction" and is generally performed in the late stages of a pregnancy.

"It's just what it says. It's partial-birth, the child is alive; it's taken out of its mother when it

shouldn't be," said Katryn Hubert, president of the Texas State student organization Bobcats for Life. The group is against abortion, the death penalty and infanticide.

Hubert said the ruling sends out a positive message within the anti-abortion movement and encourages the efforts toward future legal victories. She said the local response and support for the anti-abortion movement is gaining momentum. The ruling comes after a 10-year fight since the issue of partial-birth abortion was first introduced, she said.

"It's a major battle won," Hubert said.

Jones said the U.S. Supreme Court decision raises the need for abortion rights supporters to

recognize the influence they have in a democratic system.

"I think that every American, every Texan, needs to be really concerned about where we go from here," Jones said. "Where we go from here is the 2008 elections (and) electing a pro-choice president who's going to stand up for our values of freedom and personal responsibility."

Hubert said the legal battle over abortion issues is hardly over.

"People are going to fight for what they believe no matter what," Hubert said. "I don't think it's an issue of time. As long as there are people that believe in pro-life issues, it's going to continue to be fought for."