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Statement on the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

Hagåtña, Guam - Governor Lou Leon Guerrero issues the following statements on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization that eliminates a woman's constitutional right to abortion.

“The Leon Guerrero-Tenorio administration supports comprehensive health care for everyone on our island, including its female residents. Comprehensive health care for a woman encompasses every aspect of reproductive health care, including the very intimate, personal decision to terminate a pregnancy. Younger generations do not remember a time before the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in America. But I do. I will never forget my experience as a 22-year-old nursing student doing my senior year clinical rotations in a southern California hospital when I tended to a young woman who almost bled to death because of a botched “back alley” abortion. Literally, with the sweep of a pen, a majority of the justices on the United States Supreme Court have cut off rights and services women all over our country and our island have relied on, rights that recognize our dignity and secure our freedom to choose what is best for us. The court has set back women's rights by 50 years and demoted women to second-class citizenship with their decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. If a woman cannot control what happens within her own body, then she is not an equal citizen under our U.S. Constitution or Guam's Organic Act.

Denying women access to safe abortions by criminalizing this medical procedure only harms our community. This decision undermines a woman's right to make choices that affect every aspect of her life and the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship. And it creates an atmosphere of fear in our community. I urge our lawmakers to consider these consequences and to reject legislation that interferes with this intensely private decision that should be left to a woman and anyone she chooses to involve in that decision. Instead, I encourage our lawmakers and the community to implement compassionate measures that eliminate the need for abortion.

Bureau of Women's Affairs Director Jayne Flores issues the following statement:

“The way Guam can eliminate the need for abortion is to reduce instances of unintended pregnancy. For example, lawmakers can introduce legislation that supports: 1) comprehensive sex education that includes medically accurate information about abstinence and contraception; 2) insurance coverage of and public funding for family planning services, including free birth control; 3) greater access to emergency contraception (which prevents pregnancy and does not cause abortion); and 4) programs that curb domestic violence and sexual abuse.

When women are able to prevent unintended pregnancy, they do not have to make the difficult decision of whether to have an abortion. We absolutely encourage religious and other groups that want to stop abortion on Guam to address this issue by promoting comprehensive sex education, including the concepts of abstinence and birth control; and by educating our community about the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault.

As history has shown us, abortion cannot be prevented by passing laws that criminalize it. Women will find ways to terminate pregnancy even at great cost to their health and safety, as they have for thousands of years. Today, we have the ability to nearly eliminate the need for abortion, and it starts with implementing common sense measures that curb unwanted pregnancies. We call on our lawmakers and our community to implement such measures, as they are a much more effective and compassionate approach to addressing this issue.”

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