

## **NEWS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC VIEWPOINT 8-16-23**

### **Abortion and Democracy**

In June 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs* that there is no constitutional right to abortion. Instead, they said, it was an issue for “the people and their elected representatives.”

In Republican-led states, though, the people and their elected representatives are not on the same page. In Missouri, North Dakota, Mississippi and Florida, Republicans are working to block any votes on pro-choice initiatives.

Ohio was a test case for this Republican strategy. Last week, Ohio voted NO 57% to 43% on Issue 1. In 21<sup>st</sup> century politics, that’s a landslide.

Under Issue 1, changes to the state constitution would have required 60% approval rather than a simple majority. Ohio’s Republican legislature rushed this single issue to the voters in an unusual August election, thinking turnout would be low so it would easily pass.

Why? Because a ballot measure to codify abortion rights in Ohio’s state constitution will appear on the November general election ballot. The legislature hoped to make it much harder to pass that change.

Ohio voters were clear that a NO vote was a vote for abortion rights, which are women’s rights, and the voters overwhelmingly said NO. In the precinct where Ohio State students vote, it was reported that the tally was an incredible 98% to 2% NO.

It is not surprising that when the people speak, they support abortion rights because 69% of all Americans believe abortion should be legal in the first 3 months. You don’t get to 69% without men, women, and people of every political party agreeing.

Meanwhile the percentage of Americans wanting abortion to be illegal in all circumstances has fallen to 13% post-*Dobbs*.

Since *Dobbs*, in Michigan and Vermont, voters got reproductive protection included in their constitutions. In deep-red Kansas, an amendment to remove abortion rights from the constitution was rejected by 59% of voters. Another landslide.

Young voters, 18 to 29, who voted in the 2022 midterms said abortion was the top issue influencing their vote and 80% of them voted for Democrats for the House of Representatives. Not surprisingly, females outnumbered males. It's their lives at stake.

A 2023 report shows that women in states with abortion bans are nearly three times more likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth or soon after giving birth.

Young people voted for Democrats because Democrats support a woman's right to choose with the help of her doctor and without government intervention.

For many, abortion is a religious issue. Freedom of religion should mean freedom for all, including the 69% of Americans who do not believe that abortion should be banned in the first trimester.

Conservatives are supposed to support small government, yet the *Dobbs* decision has empowered Republican state legislatures to force women to carry unwanted or dangerous or futile pregnancies.

Abortion has become a test of democracy and majority rule. How long can the minority who believe there should be no abortions under any conditions continue to impose government oversight and their religious beliefs on women's medical conditions, personal lives and private decisions?

VOTE

~ *Deirdre Purdy, Chairperson, Calhoun County Democratic Executive Committee*