

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Right to Contraception Act Press Conference

June 5, 2024

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you. Well, thank you for organizing this, and thanks to Senator Markey for your leadership on this important legislation.

The *Griswold v. Connecticut* case was such an important moment for the history of women to get contraception, and to clarify and develop a law on the books that we had a privacy right. And that that right included the access to health care and free and full reproductive choice.

So, it's amazing that we're here now, at a moment when so many of our colleagues, just like those nominees who came before the Judiciary Committee and said that this was settled law. All of a sudden, now are on the Supreme Court basically taking away this very right. And as we fight to protect it, are now left with colleagues, that won't help us defend it. Something as basic as contraception.

We've seen state after state also not vote to protect this basic right that was so important and bestowed a freedom on families to determine when they wanted to start their families. And we are now seeing because of the Supreme Court's decision, and environment in which our healthcare is being [degraded].

We are finding states where physicians are leaving, and leaving the impact to other states who are providing care. We are seeing states that are no longer providing emergency contraception. We are seeing [these] challenges of people feeling like they are going to be prosecuted, either for providing full reproductive health care or have actions taken against them.

And we're seeing employers who don't even want to move to states [that are] planning on expansions, because they don't know what kind of rights that individuals who they're trying to attract to work in their work environment.

So yes, this is having a chilling effect on our health care delivery system. And we're not sure, as the states refuse to stand up and protect contraception, we're not sure how far they're going to go. But as one OB/GYN that was helping to practice in Idaho, said to me, yeah, it's clear, they're not done.

And so, all we were doing today was trying to clarify this basic right. This basic right that people said they believed that we had ever since *Connecticut v. Griswold*, the right to privacy and for women to do what they want to do. Something as basic as contraception, now, all of a sudden, we can't have a loud voice.

I suggest it's because they aren't done. And if they have more opportunity to curb this health care delivery system, they will. And so that is why it's time to stand up and codify the most basic aspect.

The Texas governor basically said if they don't want to see abortions, then they should basically - sorry, I'm going to have to look that up. I might not be able to find it this quickly - but basically, that people should get access to contraception, and then they limited emergency contraception.

So we need to give people access, we need to protect that access. We need to have an environment where women can get access to the health care rights they deserve.