



THE DOSSIER

The Global Consequences of America's Anti-Abortion Agenda

By Emily Prey and Kinsey Spears

Executive Summary

The United States is now one of only four countries that have [rolled back abortion rights](#) since the mid-1990s, joining Poland, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. This backsliding on gender equality is just another marker of the United States' descent into far-right [Christian nationalism](#). The U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) ruling on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which effectively overturned *Roe v. Wade* and removed federal constitutional protections for abortion access, will have effects beyond any American's access to safe and legal abortions; it will have an outsized impact on foreign policy.

According to the United Nations, forced pregnancy is a [crime against humanity](#). The *Dobbs* ruling will affect several vital foreign policy issues such as: force readiness in the U.S. military; Washington's allies' trust in the U.S. and its status as a global leader; and the ability to provide vital humanitarian and development aid. By continuing down this path, the U.S. will regularly be committing crimes against humanity, which not only erodes U.S. leadership but also hastens Washington's decline on the world stage.

Key Takeaways

- Individuals in the military will now need to travel longer distances and take more medical leave to access abortions, and recruitment and retention rates could decline overall but particularly among those who can get pregnant.
- While U.S. security alliances will not disappear immediately, Washington's status as a trusted ally with a stable and democratic government is declining even further among our partners.



Abortion rights protesters march at the U.S. Supreme Court Building with the U.S. Capitol in the background. (Anna Moneymaker / Getty Images)



- Forced pregnancies and forced births are something that the U.S. will have in common with [authoritarian states](#) that have made [egregious efforts](#) to [roll back human rights](#), putting [the lives of those who can get pregnant at risk](#).
- [The U.S. Christian right](#) has spent over \$280 million on campaigns abroad to influence laws, policies, and public opinion against sexual and reproductive rights.
- Abortion rights are inextricably tied to bodily autonomy, which is at the core of several foreign policy issues significant to the U.S., most notably the Uyghur genocide in China.
- Access to safe and legal sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion, is critical for sustainable change and to fulfilling America's promises across the world.
- President Joe Biden should sign an executive order to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is providing the best healthcare to service members of all genders, including access to abortions and abortion counseling.
- Biden and Congress should expand the Supreme Court immediately.
- The U.N. Security Council and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security should introduce a new resolution that protects women's rights by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.
- When possible, U.S. foreign policy should do its best to circumvent the Helms Amendment by providing direct cash assistance to individuals who may be in need of reproductive healthcare.

Key Policy Recommendations

- Congress must end the filibuster and pass legislation that protects every individual's right to make decisions about their own body in the name of human rights and national security.

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The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and not an official policy or position of the New Lines Institute.

COVER PHOTO: Anti-abortion activists hold signs outside the U.S. Supreme Court after the overturning of Roe v Wade in Washington, D.C., on June 24, 2022. (Stefani Reynolds / AFP via Getty Images)

The New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy

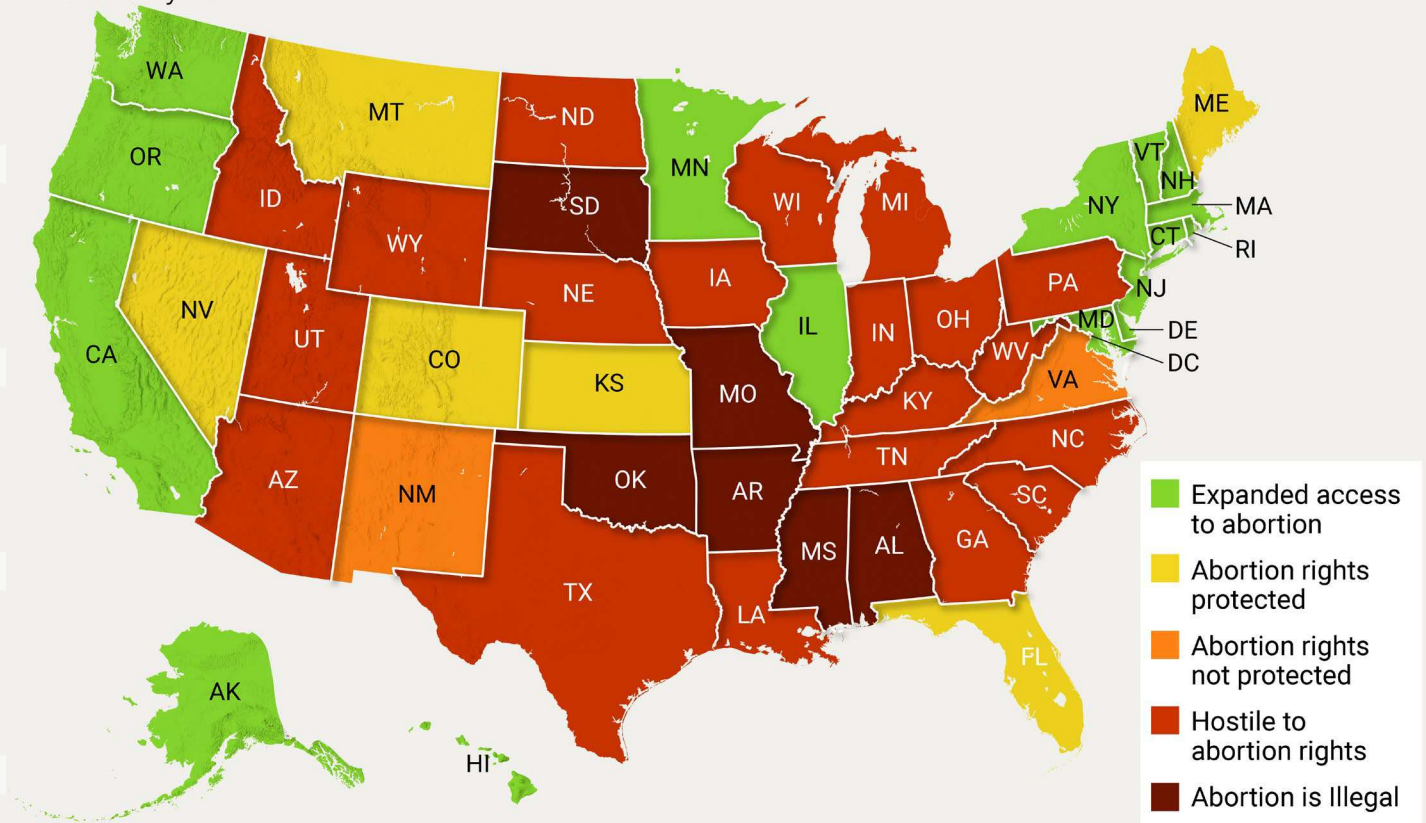
Our mission is to provoke principled and transformative leadership based on peace and security, global communities, character, stewardship, and development.

Our purpose is to shape U.S. foreign policy based on a deep understanding of regional geopolitics and the value systems of those regions.



Status of U.S. Abortion Laws by State

As of July 2022



Source: Center for Reproductive Rights

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Abortion Access is a National Security Issue

Approximately 20% of active duty U.S. military are women, [95% of whom are in child-bearing years](#). Moreover, a large number of service members cannot get pregnant but may have a partner or a child who can. An overarching majority of the current military will be affected by the Dobbs decision, and there runs a serious risk to force readiness for two key reasons: Individuals will need to travel longer distances and take more medical leave to access abortions, and recruitment and retention rates will go down for all members of the military, particularly among those who can get pregnant.

In multiple states, abortion rights have been restricted, with [battles for abortion access](#) now taking place

across the country. [According to the Department of Defense \(DoD\)](#) and the [Congressional Research Service](#), 240,000 service members live in such states, including approximately 45,000 active duty women and 39,000 female reservists – many of whom will now have to travel out of state to receive adequate medical care or potentially be forced to carry a pregnancy to term against their will. Members of the military have always had hoops to jump through in order to receive abortion care, and with Roe overturned, the situation has become even more complex.

Service members requiring access to abortion care have long been required to go to civilian clinics. Since 2012, in cases of rape, incest, or if the mother's life was at risk, an individual could [use Tricare to cover abortion expenses](#). In order for abortion care to be provided on a military base, there had to be a good-faith assumption that the individual seeking an abortion was



doing so only in one of the three circumstances stated above. (These strict conditions put service members who have been sexually assaulted at [heightened risk](#) since they must disclose their rape in order to receive adequate and comprehensive medical care.)

Otherwise, those in need of abortion care must travel off-base due to what is known as the “facilities ban,” forcing those both at home and abroad to go elsewhere find proper medical care. Fewer than 100 abortions in the last five calendar years and [only 14 abortions](#) in 2021 were performed on all Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy bases combined. It is clear that the military is not providing enough access to abortion care if only 100 abortions were performed in the last five years when, compared to nationwide statistics, approximately 930,160 legal, induced abortions were [performed](#) in the U.S. in 2020 alone.

After the Dobbs ruling, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [released a statement](#) assuring troops that the health and well-being of service members is of the utmost importance and that the Department will continue to provide reproductive care in line with federal law. Despite this, [a memo](#) from the Pentagon office overseeing personnel and readiness stated that the reversal of Roe “will have significant implications for our service members, dependents, other beneficiaries of DoD health care services, and civilian employees, as well as the readiness of the force,” and abortion restrictions need to be evaluated against state and federal law. Assurances that military bases will continue to provide abortions in the event of rape, incest, or danger to the health of the pregnant individual are simply not enough to quell legitimate fears and concerns about the recent Supreme Court decision.

Tens of thousands of military personnel and their families are stationed in states where abortion is banned and criminalized, such as Texas, which hosts over 115,000 active duty members. This will lead to individuals in the service and their families needing to travel, [sometimes upwards of 500 miles](#), to access medical care. Due to these barriers, some individuals will choose to initiate self-induced abortions or go to an unlicensed facility, putting their health and lives at risk. This leads to lost time and could lead to individuals not being able to meet mission

requirements or deploy when necessary, hindering the country’s fighting force.

The lack of safe, reliable, and accessible abortion care will not only harm those currently serving and those who want to continue to serve; it could also drastically affect recruitment and retention rates among individuals who can get pregnant. In an interview with Defense News, Erin Kirk-Cuomo, former Marine and founder of the Not in My Marine Corps advocacy group, went so far as to imply women wanting to join the military should [reevaluate their decision](#) due to Dobbs: “If a woman is considering enlisting, I would highly encourage her to rethink that choice.” [Women who become pregnant](#) while serving are also at risk of increased rates of sexual harassment, which has a negative effect on their inclusion, promotions, and overall careers. It is clear that in the military pregnancy is treated as a burden, yet soon service members will not be able to decide when is the right time for them to carry a baby to term. With every branch of the military struggling to meet its 2022 recruiting goals to the point that Pentagon officials are “[scrambling](#)” to fill out the ranks, the threat of fewer individuals requiring potential abortion care for themselves or their dependents enlisting in the military is cause for alarm.

Once individuals affected by the loss of abortion access are in the military, the challenge of retention rears its head. According to 38,000 responses from the [Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey](#) in 2021, one of the top reasons individuals leave the military is issues related to family and family planning. According to [the Government Accountability Office](#) women are more likely to leave the military than men, at a rate 28% higher, in part due to family planning.

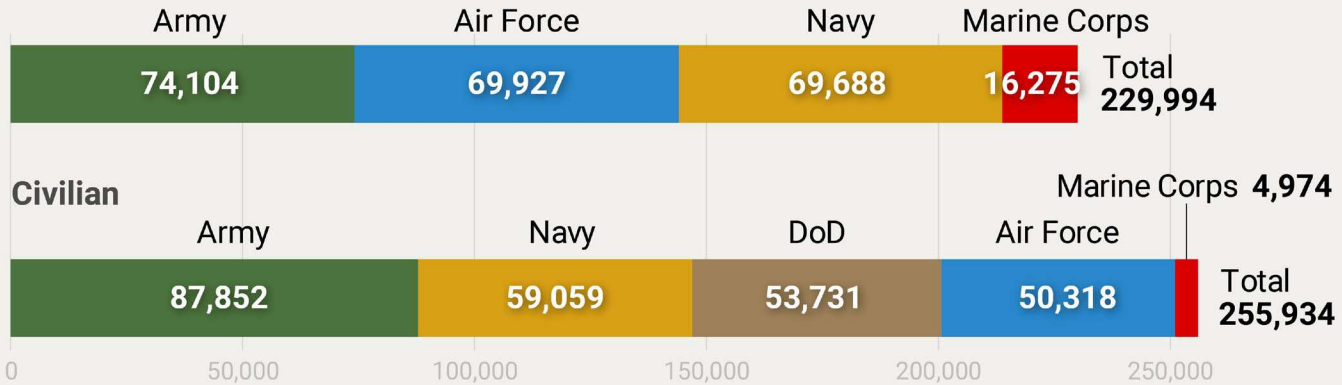
There are many reasons why lack of access to abortion care might affect retention rates: Those who know they might need access to abortion care may choose to terminate their service if they are assigned to a state where trigger laws are in place, individuals who are forced to carry an unwanted baby to term might have to leave service in order to care for the child, or perhaps most drastically, those [who die in childbirth](#) will obviously no longer be able to carry out their mission. Unplanned pregnancy and being forced to carry to term will also have an impact on an individual’s ability to be promoted where career



Women in U.S. Military and in the U.S. Defense Sector

2021

Active duty



Source: diversity.defense.gov

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success can sometimes be [contingent on forgoing children](#). It is vital that Congress and the DoD do everything in their power to ensure that all members of the military, and their family members, have safe, equitable, and legal access to abortion.

The military's response to diminishing abortion rights in the U.S. does not just impact force readiness domestically; it has implications for U.S. security partners globally. The [DoD Women, Peace, and Security \(WPS\) agenda](#) explicitly states that one of the primary objectives is: "Women in partner nations meaningfully participate and serve at all ranks and in all occupations in defense and security sectors." The plan stipulates that one of the primary methods for achieving this goal is to *model and implement* principles to increase women's participation in the security sector. If individuals in the U.S. who can get pregnant cannot access vital health care, how can the U.S. be a model for effective women's integration into the armed forces?

As a part of its commitments to the WPS agenda, the U.S. should be encouraging greater access to family planning in order to increase recruitment and retention for individuals who can get pregnant in partner nations' forces as well. The U.S. has made efforts to ensure that language around abortion and reproductive rights are not explicit in the broader

WPS agenda by [threatening to veto](#) a U.N. resolution on rape as a weapon of war until language in the resolution regarding sexual and reproductive health was watered down.

U.S. Global Leadership at Risk

There was considerable international outcry after the SCOTUS decision on Dobbs v. Jackson was made official; many world leaders took to Twitter to decry the ruling. The First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, [said](#) it was "one of the darkest days for women's rights in my lifetime." Sturgeon was not alone, as heads of state in the [United Kingdom](#), [Germany](#), [France](#), [Canada](#), and many others spoke out against the decision. The SCOTUS ruling clearly puts the United States at odds with the [majority of its closest allies](#). This has led leaders in some countries to further [enshrine rights to abortion access](#) for fears that anti-abortion activists in Europe will become more emboldened after the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Biden and other Americans were confronted with this "[value gap](#)" at the NATO and G7 Summits in June, during which many U.S. allies questioned the SCOTUS ruling. Marti Flacks, director of the Human Rights Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, [said it showed](#) "a broader concern about [how] they want to know that the U.S. continues to share their values." While U.S. security



alliances are not going to disappear immediately or even in the foreseeable future, the SCOTUS decision is another major blow to [Biden's notion](#) of "leading by the power of our example rather than the example of our power." With recent SCOTUS rulings on other hot-button issues such as gun restrictions and climate change, Washington's status as a trusted ally with shared values is declining even further.

Unfortunately, the United States is becoming more in step with authoritarian leaders who have nearly non-existent records on improving human rights and women's rights, like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un, even though one of Biden's main policies has been to [renew democracy](#) in the U.S. and around the world. Through his two Summit for Democracy events, Biden has placed democratic resilience at the forefront of his domestic and foreign policies by aiming to lead a global alliance of democracies against the growing autocracies of the world. And yet, America's rollback of abortion rights mirrors Russia's rollback of women's rights over the years. In the last five years, Putin has passed anti-feminist measures including [decriminalizing](#) domestic violence and [prohibiting](#) women from dozens of professions deemed "too arduous" or "harmful for women's reproductive health."

The SCOTUS decision not only puts Biden's progress on democratic resilience in jeopardy, it also erodes America's ability to protect our values against those of our strategic competitors. After the Dobbs decision, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro [tweeted](#) a picture of him holding a baby which said: "May God continue to give strength and wisdom to those who protect the innocence and future of our children, in Brazil and around the world." The lack of access to abortion in Brazil became worldwide news in June when an 11-year old rape victim was [denied](#) access to an abortion by a judge, in spite of the obvious health concerns due to her age and in direct contradiction to the young girl's wishes. This closely mirrored a story in the U.S. about a [10-year old rape victim](#) in Ohio who was denied an abortion when Ohio's trigger law fell into place, banning abortions in the state after just six weeks. Forced pregnancies and forced births are something that the United States will have in common with [authoritarian states](#) that have made [egregious efforts](#) to [roll back human rights](#) putting [the lives of those who can get pregnant at risk](#).

The most recent legislation in some American states is even more draconian than many countries further down on the [Freedom House](#) rating of people's access to political rights and civil liberties. Some American states that have [effectively](#) banned abortion across the board have "fewer human rights protections [in their states] than Iran or Saudi Arabia" – countries that are often painted as human-rights boogymen by U.S. politicians on both sides of the aisle. Meanwhile, advocates and activists in other countries, including many of our allies and partners, have fought tirelessly over the years to change abortion bans through legislative and judicial measures, with over [53 countries](#) expanding access to abortion care since 1994.

The ability to access safe and reliable abortion care will also affect people's decisions to come to the U.S. to pursue work, entrepreneurship, education, and potentially even tourism. In 2014, [16% of the abortions provided](#) in the U.S. were performed on individuals who did not live in the country. There is a real concern that the number of international students choosing to study in the U.S. will [continue to decrease](#). International students coming to the U.S. for education is important for U.S. soft power, for [domestic university finances](#), and for university towns that rely heavily on students who might be now unwilling to move to states with abortion bans. [Economists have been raising the alarm](#) about the impact that abortion restrictions will have on states with near-total bans, but with the potential loss of Democratic control of the Senate and House in 2022 and an uncertain presidential election in 2024, a possible nationwide abortion ban would be bad for businesses and bad for the economy. With [companies moving](#) to find ways to ensure access to abortion to their employees in states with restrictions and bans, those same measures might begin to impact international investment in the U.S.

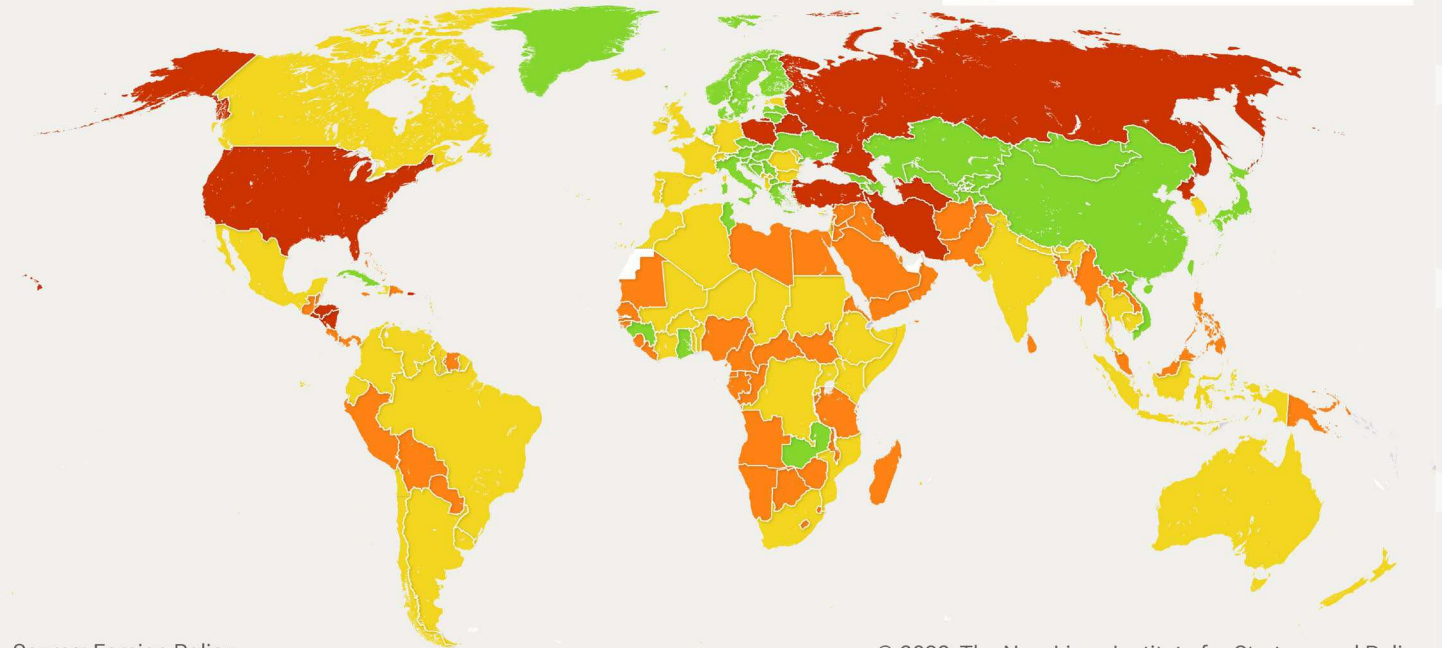
Beyond long-term investments in U.S. education and the economy, the reversal of Roe may also [affect tourism to the U.S.](#) Domestic politics have affected travel and tourism in the past, and individuals who are pregnant may [reconsider trips](#) to the U.S., where they will not be able to receive adequate health care.



Status of Abortion Laws Since 1990

As of July 2022

- Legal (no change)
- Increased abortion access
- Illegal in most cases (no change)
- Decreased abortion access



Source: Foreign Policy

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Exporting the U.S. Right and Global Threats Against Bodily Autonomy

Christian fundamentalists and the Republican Party consider the rollback on abortion rights domestically as a win; [according to](#) investigative reporter and author Katherine Stewart, “breaking American democracy isn’t an unintended side effect of Christian nationalism. It is the point of the project.” Over the years, both the Christian right and the Republican Party have increasingly attempted to [destroy the fragile barrier](#) between church and state in the U.S.

Alarmingly, the global far right also sees the SCOTUS ruling as a win. There is a growing movement to [export American anti-abortion activism](#), along with [anti-LGBTQ+](#) activism. Activists and organizations in the United States have spent over [\\$88 million](#) on “anti-gender” activities in Europe largely carried out by the U.S. Christian right. Since 2008, these groups have spent nearly \$280 million in total on campaigns abroad to influence laws, policies, and public opinion against sexual and reproductive rights. The funding

comes from foundations and mega-donors who are notorious in U.S. politics and culture and [include the DeVos family, the Koch Brothers, and the Billy Graham Foundation](#). They are all benefactors for NGOs and advocacy groups that try to promote a like-minded religious extremist cultural and social agenda in Europe. European advocates rushing to further enshrine abortion rights into law are not being hyperbolic but instead are preparing for the next wave of anti-abortion activism to move across the Atlantic.

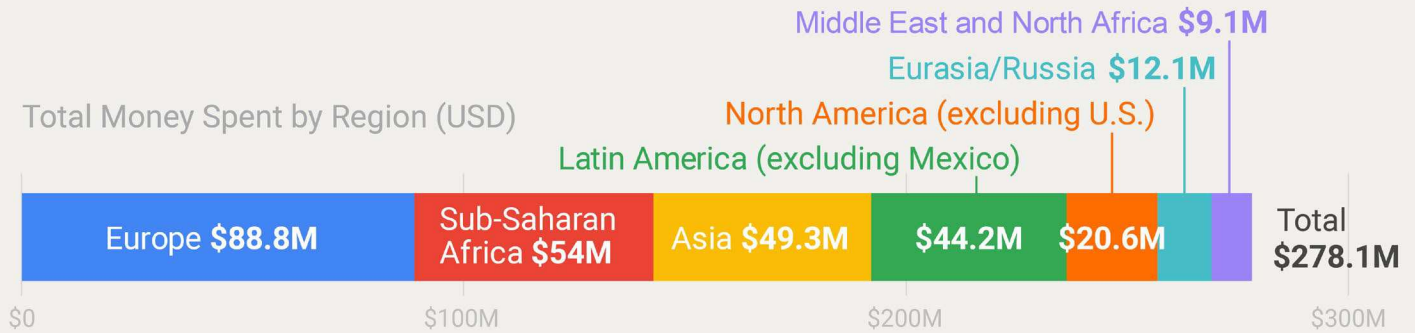
Abortion rights are inextricably tied to bodily autonomy. In her Senate confirmation hearing in 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg [told](#) the committee: “The decision whether or not to bear a child is central to a woman’s life, to her well-being and dignity. It is a decision she must make for herself. When Government controls that decision for her, she is being treated as less than a fully adult human responsible for her own choices.”

While the U.S. claims to be a [fierce proponent](#) of women’s rights abroad, its recent actions belie this notion. However, bodily autonomy is at the core of



Dark Money: U.S. Christian Right and the Anti-Abortion Agenda

According to a 2020 Open Democracy investigation, Christian groups (many of them linked to the Trump administration and opposing LGBT and women's reproductive rights) have spent nearly \$280 million of 'dark money' outside the U.S. since 2008.



Source: opendemocracy.net

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several foreign policy issues of significance to the United States, including the Uyghur genocide in China. China is viewed as the [greatest security threat](#) to the U.S. and [our allies](#), yet for years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been carrying out a genocide against the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang, a hallmark of which is its coercive family planning programs. The CCP is [actively using gender](#) in its calculus and targeting Uyghur women, specifically their sexual and reproductive organs, as a means to an end. Uyghur women's bodies have become emblematic of this genocide. In December 2021, the [Uyghur Tribunal](#) came to the decision that violations of the Genocide Convention did in fact occur *because* of the measures put in place by the CCP intended to prevent births within the group. The CCP has taken complete control of Uyghur women's bodies, rendering the notion of bodily autonomy meaningless, and has invaded the incredibly personal space of sexual and reproductive health and planning with the end goal of destroying the Uyghur group.

Coercive family planning and birth prevention, including forced sterilizations and the forcible implantation of IUDs, are not unique to China; the U.S. has a long, sordid history with forcibly sterilizing its own populations deemed "[unfit to procreate](#)." With roots in [slavery](#), American [sterilization and eugenics programs](#) have targeted indigenous people, minorities, and those with disabilities for hundreds of years.

The U.S. government and U.S. drug companies also have a history of performing "[contraceptive dumps](#)" across the Global South, where they provided (most famously in the 1970s) unsafe IUDs, birth control pills, and injectable contraceptives not approved for use in the U.S. to women in countries like Paraguay, Tunisia, and Thailand. The dangers of the Dalkon Shield IUD in particular were already known before these dumps. [Over 200,000 women](#) with this IUD claimed that the device caused miscarriages, blood poisoning, pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancies, and even death.

The common issue in these various movements is bodily autonomy. Forced sterilization programs and anti-abortion efforts boil down to controlling people's bodies and their sexual and reproductive rights.

Today, American women's bodies are being used by the Republican Party and the Christian right to symbolize the return to "[family values](#)." Each year brings [new challenges](#) and [new restrictions](#) on American bodies and choices. While the U.S. has been one of the most vocal opponents of China's genocidal campaign against the Uyghurs, the hypocrisy in policies must be noted: If America calls for an end to this genocide, for the restoration of Uyghur women's bodily autonomy and choice in family planning, then the U.S. must also come to terms with its own history and respect the bodily autonomy and personal choices of Americans at home.



Backsliding on Humanitarian and Development Work

The SCOTUS decision to strike down *Roe v. Wade* sends the message to the world that, according to the United States, abortion rights are not human rights. This directly contradicts the values that the U.S. attempts to export and advocate in other countries through its foreign policy and particularly through humanitarian and development aid. Although abortion is a common medical procedure and health intervention for tens of millions of people who can get pregnant around the globe every year, 45% of the world's abortions remain [unsafe](#) – and 97% of these occur in developing countries.

Biden's foreign policy agenda was introduced with the campaign slogan "America is back," which was aimed at re-legitimizing U.S. leadership and repairing relations with our allies after the Trump administration's [poor record](#) on supporting [women](#) and girls.

Biden has spoken frequently about [uplifting](#) and [defending](#) the rights of women and girls both at home and abroad as key pieces of U.S. policy. His own development agency, USAID, also prioritizes women's health and rights in its work abroad. In USAID's [Joint Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#), the first strategic objective is to strengthen global health security, which includes family planning and reproductive health. Discussing family planning and reproductive health without abortion access is short-sighted and does not provide adequate care for individuals in developing countries where USAID works.

One of the main priorities of the White House Gender Policy Council's [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), released in 2021, is also to protect, improve, and expand access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, and to advance human rights and gender equality under the law. The plan specifically mentions that the U.S. must protect safe and legal access to abortion both at home and abroad. The goals outlined in the plan, which include increasing access to high-quality, affordable family planning services, decreasing maternal mortality, and expanding sexual and reproductive health care, cannot be accomplished without abortion rights. Access to safe and legal sexual and reproductive healthcare,

which includes abortion, is critical for sustainable change and to fulfilling America's promises in the developing world.

Research shows that rates of unintended pregnancies are connected to the overall development of a nation, and these rates tend to be lower in countries where abortion is protected, rather than restricted, under the law. According to UNFPA's [2022 State of World Population Report](#), "higher levels of informed choice in reproductive decision-making are part of a positive cycle fueling other development gains" such as zero hunger and quality education. Countries with higher levels of gender inequality also have higher levels of unintended pregnancy. The report found that only 57% of women worldwide are able to say no to sex and make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Preventing pregnancies in the first place is best way to address these issues, but when that is not possible, abortion must remain an option.

The impact of U.S. policies abroad – such as the Helms Amendment, which prevents the use of foreign assistance for abortions and whose implementation has been detrimental to U.S. foreign aid for decades, or the ripple effects of Dobbs – are often ignored. Take, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, where rape is frequently used as a method of war and the majority of healthcare in the country is funded by USAID. In 2021 alone, the U.S. government [provided](#) over \$131 million in humanitarian funding to the country but has [threatened](#) to pull funding from health clinics if abortion care was made more accessible. This lack of medical care has resulted in easily avoidable and unnecessary deaths: A 14-year-old was raped and became pregnant, but the clinics were not allowed to provide her with abortion services due to U.S. regulations on funding. She died after attempting an unsafe abortion.

Considering that the U.S. is often the largest donor of humanitarian aid to low- to middle-income countries, the rollback of abortion rights in the U.S. will only serve to negatively affect health care and medical treatment in those countries. Of the [56 countries](#) that receive U.S. global health assistance specifically for family planning and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, 48 have legalized abortion in at least one



circumstance in their national laws. But due to U.S. restrictions on aid, including the Helms Amendment and the [Mexico City Policy](#), these countries are unable to enact their national laws to support people who can get pregnant for fear of losing critical U.S. funding. Dobbs v. Jackson and subsequent abortion restrictions will continue to hinder rather than help U.S. foreign policy goals and international development aims.

Conclusion

The Dobbs decision and reversal of Roe v. Wade have left many, including U.S. allies, [questioning](#) the reliability and integrity of U.S. leadership on the world stage and the future of Biden's agenda to protect global democratic resilience. In July, the White House released its [U.S. Government Women Peace and Security Report to Congress](#), which made no mention of abortion, family planning, or sexual and reproductive healthcare. Standing up for the human rights of women and, as the WPS report says, "empowering all women and girls" is not possible without also protecting bodily autonomy and abortion rights. Biden [says](#): "The essential truth [is] that the world is more peaceful when possibilities are endless for women and girls everywhere." And yet, his administration continues to skirt around this issue, even now, when threats to bodily autonomy in America loom larger than they have in 50 years.

Recommendations

1. Congress must end [the filibuster](#) and pass legislation that protects every individual's right to make decisions about their own body in the name of human rights and national security. Enshrining the right of every individual to make decisions about their healthcare and ensure their bodily autonomy is a fundamental aspect of protecting human rights. It is important that the U.S. Congress move to codify abortion access, regardless of reason, for all individuals. [Biden](#) has called on Congress to restore the protections of Roe v. Wade as federal law. With the filibuster intact and the Senate split evenly along party lines, it is unlikely that the Senate will be able to pass any of the bills that move to federally protect abortion access, such as the [Women's Health Protection Act](#).
2. Biden should sign an executive order to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is providing the best healthcare to service members of all genders, which entails access to abortions and abortion counseling. The Department of Veterans Affairs is the largest integrated healthcare provider in the country and provides healthcare to over [600,000 female veterans](#), but over [380,000 female veterans](#) live in states where abortion bans are likely or already in place. Operation Liberty has made a [similar call](#), saying, "The VA Secretary can and should exercise his current authority to make this happen immediately."
3. [The Department of the Air Force](#) recently released a policy that allows for individuals in the Air Force who are, or have a family member who is, LGBTQ+ to receive additional support and potentially relocate based on state laws. The military is increasingly aware that certain states' policies are at odds with the values that the military espouses. The military should set up programs and policies similar to the Air Force's commitment to "assist families with special needs during the PCS [Permanent Change of Station] process to include navigating medical, legal, and educational support for dependents during relocation" for individuals seeking abortion care. While it is not particularly feasible, for example, to reassign all individuals in Texas who might need abortion care, it is vital that the military do everything in its power to ensure the health and safety of all personnel. The next step should be for the Defense Department and Congress to begin to determine whether it is in the best interest of the military to look into [Base Realignment and Closure](#) for bases in states where a growing portion of the military population are not safe.
4. Biden and Congress should expand the Supreme Court. At no place in the Constitution does it set the specific number of justices who should serve on the Supreme Court at any given time; [it is a matter for Congress to decide](#) as a check on the power of the court. The first Supreme Court had six justices after the passage of the Judiciary Act in 1789 and has subsequently been re-sized and reorganized [seven times](#). Congress has the power to make the court as large or as small as it likes.

Given the [unpopularity](#) of the most recent ruling on abortion, it is clear that the court is out of touch with the majority of the American public.



It is also apparent that the Court is not prepared to stop at abortion; Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito have made statements and included in their opinions that laws predicated on the [14th Amendment](#), such as access to birth control and gay marriage, are at risk. Protecting bodily autonomy is vital to the future of U.S. democracy and a cohesive U.S. foreign policy. Adding justices to the court is [not extreme nor is it out of step](#) with historical precedence. Biden and Congress should move to add more justices to the court to protect the human rights of all Americans while also restoring faith in an independent judiciary committed to rule of law over political or religious ideology.

5. The U.N. Security Council and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security should take advantage of the Biden administration's stance in favor of abortion access and promises of gender equality and introduce a new resolution that protects women's rights by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. In the past, the U.S. conservative stance on abortion [weakened](#) the global WPS agenda, to the detriment of the countless women around the world who are impacted by conflict and crisis.

During the Trump administration, the U.S. threatened to veto any resolution that included access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, watering down language and withdrawing critical support for people who can get pregnant in need of medical

interventions around the world, especially victims of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Lilianne Ploumen, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation [said](#): "You would expect in 2017 the rights of women and girls to be the masters of their own bodies and their own sexual lives would be something matter-of-fact."

6. When possible, U.S. foreign policy should circumvent the Helms Amendment by providing direct cash assistance to individuals in need of reproductive healthcare. A [2020 Government Accountability Office Report to Congress](#) found that \$153 million in U.S. funding was declined by NGOs abroad from 2017-2018 due to Helms' restriction of abortion as a method of healthcare and/or family planning. Donors should follow the example set by USAID, which recently [allocated](#) \$12.4 million in support of life-saving access to reproductive health and protection services for women and girls in Ukraine. With this funding, the U.N. Population Fund will be able to provide direct cash assistance to some of the most vulnerable in this war – pregnant and lactating women, and survivors of gender-based violence. By [funneling cash to women directly](#) with the understanding that they are best positioned to make decisions for themselves and their families, instead of funding health clinics, USAID and the U.N. Population Fund can effectively bypass Helms' restrictions on U.S. foreign funding.



Emily Prey is a Senior Analyst for Special Initiatives at the New Lines Institute. Previously, Prey served as Project Manager of the Financial Integration in Displacement Initiative of the International Rescue Committee at Tufts University. She has also worked with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Prey is a child protection and gender specialist with several years of experience working in international development settings and has lived in Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Middle East. Her areas of research include child marriage, human trafficking, and transitional justice.



Kinsey Spears is a doctoral candidate at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where her work focuses on gender, security studies, and Women, Peace, and Security. Spears is also a researcher for the Feinstein International Center; a Teaching Fellow for Gender, Culture and Conflict and Security Sector Reform: Conceptual and Contextual Debates in Peacebuilding; and a Research Fellow at the World Peace Foundation. She has also worked as a Director of Scheduling in the U.S. Senate. She tweets at @Kinspears.

Contact



For media inquiries, email media@newlinesinstitute.org



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1776 Massachusetts Ave N.W. Suite 120
Washington, D.C. 20036



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