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Today is the 40th anniversary of the January 22, 1973 U.S. Supreme Court Decision Roe v. Wade. Prior to 1973 many states in the U.S. made abortion a crime or severely restricted it. Roe v. Wade held that a woman has a constitutional right to choose abortion and that right cannot be restricted or prohibited at certain stages of her pregnancy.

Prior to 1973, many women died or were maimed by illegal abortions. Many hemorrhaged or bled to death from illegal abortions which were performed in back alleys and in other unsanitary places by individuals who had no medical training and who did it for the money.

I was one of those women who didn't die but who almost bled to death. After I was raped at gun point in Mexico in the 1960's, became pregnant and returned to the U.S. I obtained an

abortion from someone who performed an abortion on me and then fled.

I developed a severe infection, had a fever of 106 degrees and had to be taken to the hospital hemorrhaging and almost dying.

Fortunately for me I was packed in ice and the doctors saved my life.

Millions of women in this nation suffered a similar horror to the one I suffered.

This is why so many women today are pro-choice and are strongly committed to keeping abortion safe and legal. We want to be sure that our daughters and their daughters are never forced to suffer in the way that we did.

Unfortunately, however, ever since Roe v. Wade was

decided, the decision to protect the right to choose abortion has been under attack in the streets, in the courts, in the state legislature and in Congress. Constant efforts to eliminate or restrict that constitutional right continue.

For example, today in approximately 87% of all the counties in the U.S. a woman has no access to abortion because doctors and health care providers have been terrorized and sometimes murdered. Restriction of this right particularly hurts the poor and the young and it should not be tolerated.

Today, I mark this 40th anniversary by giving my own blood to symbolize the blood women and girls will need if and when Roe v. Wade is further undermined.

Women's blood will be on the hands of those who continue to attack this constitutional right to choose abortion. No woman or girl should ever be forced to risk their life in order to obtain an abortion.

On this 40th anniversary I and many other women are committed to keeping abortion safe, legal and available and never again allowing abortion to be made illegal and dangerous to the life, health and safety of our mothers, sisters and daughters.

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NARAL Pro-Choice America

- 87 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion provider...
- 111 abortion restrictions were enacted in the states in 2011 and 2012 alone...
- 33 states have laws that subject women seeking abortion services to biased-counseling requirements and/or mandatory delays... and
- 45 states and the District of Columbia have laws subjecting abortion providers to burdensome restrictions not imposed on other medical professionals.