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My statement on the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade

Today is the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Roe v. Wade, which was decided on January 22, 1973. Prior to Roe v. Wade, many states made it a crime for a doctor or anyone to assist a pregnant woman to have an abortion. Even women like me who were raped at gun point and became pregnant as a result, were not able in many states to have a legal and safe abortion. As a result, many women had to risk their lives to have unsafe “back alley” abortions, which caused them in many cases to die as they attempted to terminate their pregnancies. For that reason, it was very important to women and girls that in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that states could no longer criminalize abortion, because women had a constitutional right of liberty and privacy rooted in the U.S. Constitution.

Many of us celebrated that landmark decision, which now has been reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in June 2022 called Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. That decision has now forced women and girls to return to pre-Roe v. Wade days where we had to fight state by state for the right to have legal, safe, affordable and available abortions. On this important anniversary, I will be marching and speaking in Long Beach, California, and urging women to continue to fight for our rights.

In addition, I invited the pro-choice daughter of Jane Roe a.k.a. Norma McCorvey (whose name is Melissa Mills) to march with me.

I represented her mother, Norma, for many years in her struggle to have her voice heard in support of Roe v. Wade. Norma is now deceased, but in a deathbed statement she made it clear that she had always been pro-choice. Now her daughter, Melissa, is here with me today to voice her support for legal and safe abortions.

I am proud to march with her in memory of her mother’s herstoric victory, and in support of the battle for choice, which is ongoing and which lies ahead. As

we wage this battle and remember Jane Roe, we remain committed to the words of the famous labor organizer, Mother Jones: “Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living.”

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