

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2021

President Joseph Biden
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Texas Democratic Delegation, we thank you for the leadership you and your Cabinet have demonstrated in support of reproductive health and rights in the days following the events of last week. We are deeply appreciative of the Justice Department's lawsuit challenging the extreme abortion ban in our state. Since this moment also calls for legislative action to protect access to abortion across the country, we are writing to you to urge you to publicly support the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA) and issue a Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) in support of the bill. WHPA is a step towards creating a future where every woman—no matter who they are and where they're from—is free to make the personal health decisions that are best for themselves, their lives, and their families, without political interference. When enacted, WHPA will help protect the right to abortion throughout the United States.

The constitutional protections of *Roe v. Wade* are under unprecedented threat. The Supreme Court has just allowed Texas' six-week abortion ban (S.B. 8) to go into effect in violation of nearly 50 years of precedent set in *Roe*, forcing nearly all abortion services to an abrupt stop across the state. This law encourages vigilante lawsuits by allowing anyone to sue abortion providers and anyone they suspect of helping another person access an abortion. The attacks on reproductive rights this year have been relentless. 2021 was the worst year for state abortion restrictions since *Roe* was decided, with over 90 restrictions enacted in just the first half of this year. Additionally, last month, the Fifth Circuit upheld a Texas ban on the standard method of abortion after approximately 15 weeks of pregnancy, becoming the first federal court to do so. Additionally, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, a case challenging Mississippi's unconstitutional pre-viability abortion ban, awaits arguments at the Supreme Court with a decision expected next year.

To put it bluntly, our constituents are seeing their rights stripped away before their very eyes, and efforts to ban abortion will not stop with those in Texas. We're already seeing copycat bills — people hostile to reproductive rights have pledged to introduce them in Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, and South Dakota, and we expect even more. We must stop this erosion of people's constitutional rights.

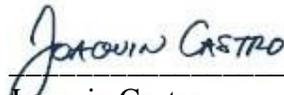
For patients, S.B. 8 may mean travelling hundreds of miles out of state to get an abortion. That means missing work, securing childcare, finding a hotel, and paying for the procedure. This is all in addition to the barriers patients are already facing because of immigration status, language barriers, the lengthy process for minors to access care, and more. According to new research from the Guttmacher Institute, the Texas law will increase the average one-way driving distance for pregnant Texans seeking an abortion by twenty times—from 12 miles to 248 miles. Due to discrimination, many Black, Latino, Indigenous people, people with low-incomes, and people in rural areas are already facing barriers to accessing health care as well as bearing the brunt of the pandemic and economic crisis. Ensuring access to abortion care is central to individuals having the right to make decisions about their bodies, families, and communities and live in safe and sustainable communities free from violence.

Every day, more and more people are being denied their constitutional right to abortion. This crisis in access demands federal solutions. WHPA creates a statutory right for providers to provide abortion care, and patients to receive that care because abortion must not only be legal, but also available, safe, affordable, and within reach for all people. WHPA is intended to put an end to, and declare illegal, laws like S.B. 8 that are simply the result of some lawmakers and interest groups imposing their values on people who are just working to make ends meet. You can help protect access to abortion in our state, and nationwide, now by supporting the passage of this critical legislation and taking any other measures at your disposal to support abortion access in Texas and across the country.

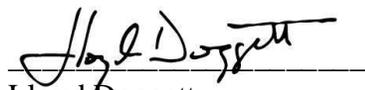
Sincerely,



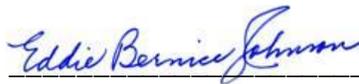
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



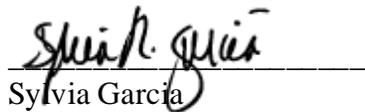
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



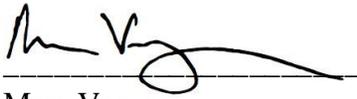
Lizzie Fletcher
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