



For the first time in American history, a constitutional right has been withdrawn. The implications are profound. This decision is not fundamentally about childbearing or child-rearing, or about children at all. It's about controlling women and restricting their possibilities. The Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* deprives women – the overwhelming majority of the early childhood workforce, of the families we serve, and of our staff – of a measure of equality and justice. If people cannot control their bodies, their lives, how can they be free and equal?

The decision to have a child is an intensely personal choice. Its implications affect an individual's health, well-being, educational attainment, workforce participation, job security, and family relationships. Raising children is not simple or easy, especially if you are struggling with the host of challenges that fall inequitably across our community. Given these implications, the Supreme Court's decision is upsetting and alarming.

Reproductive freedom is essential to parenting with dignity. That's true anywhere, but is notable in a nation without paid leave, where child care of any quality is costly and in short supply, where poverty abounds, and opportunity is limited by gender, race, and ethnicity.

When people have the freedom to decide if and when to become parents, they can parent at their best. When birth is an outcome forced by the power of the state, parenting with dignity is elusive at best.

By making abortion harder to access or illegal, the decision will make abortion unsafe. By making women carry even risky and non-viable pregnancies to term, it will make pregnancy and child birth more dangerous.

Children deserve a world filled with love, respect, and support, for both them and their parents. These conditions require a commitment to gender equality and racial justice. These conditions require a commitment to reproductive justice and economic justice. As organizations committed to the well-being of children and families, we stand with those who will continue to fight for justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Karolak".

*Eric Karolak, Ph.D. CAE
CEO, Action for Children*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Mendez".

*Nancy Mendez,
President and CEO, Starting Point*