



## Keene Pride's response to the US Supreme Court's leaked draft opinion overturning Roe V. Wade

Roe v. Wade was a 1971 - 1973 landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. The ruling determined that it was unconstitutional to remove a woman's right to privacy, and in doing so abortion was made a fundamental, legal right that could not be arbitrarily removed by the political whim of a state.

The overturn of Roe v. Wade would remove the constitutional principle to sovereign privacy, a precedent that Roe established and has been used to gain hard-earned LGBTQ rights.

Legal restrictions on abortion disproportionately impact people of color, people with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS, survivors of gender violence and the LGBTQ community. These individuals already face an uphill battle with inherent systemic barriers and discrimination that impact their access to healthcare.

Because Roe v. Wade followed a number of *earlier* U.S. Supreme Court cases regarding the right to privacy and equal standing, the ruling served as the basis for LGBTQ equality and marriage equality decisions decades later. The importance of these precedents are critical. Think of them as building blocks, without which the lives of citizens are toppled when the tower implodes.

Understanding the importance of the link between Roe v. Wade and the LGBTQ community begs the question: if a conservative court can overturn Roe, what is next? A game of political retribution due to philosophical differences about the meaning of equality demonstrates an ugly underbelly at the nation's highest court. Removing this legal defense of privacy means that states will once more be able to interfere with a person's right to make their own choices about their life.

We are witnessing governmental interference with abortion rights in Texas and Mississippi in real time. And look at how quickly that sense of confidence escalated to members of the Supreme Court.

There is only one question. What happens if Roe v. Wade is actually overturned? Individual freedom will be shredded when it comes to abortion rights. The LGBTQ community faces an uncertain future when the underpinning of Roe v. Wade is gone. Each case that stood on the shoulders of Roe v. Wade will be weakened and threatened. Removing the basic right to privacy eliminates the safety, security and happiness in the personal and professional lives of LGBTQ persons.

This conversation is not hyperbole. In the last ten years alone, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals have had – and continue to have - their very existence threatened. It is not farfetched to consider that if Roe can be undone, then LGBTQ rights can also be overturned.

Devastating challenges to civil rights are lurking in the nation's highest court. Targeted populations have much to fear if Roe v. Wade is not allowed to stand.