

BERNARD SANDERS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
VERMONT, AT LARGE

509 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4501
TELEPHONE: 202-225-4115
FAX: 202-225-6790

191 BANK STREET
BURLINGTON, VT 05401-3845
TELEPHONE: 802-862-0697
TOLL FREE: 800-339-9834
FAX: 802-860-6370

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4501

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Remarks delivered for Bernie to the Pro-Choice Rally
at City Hall noontime in Burlington July 2, 1992

For the first time in our nation's history, a fundamental and established right bestowed by the Supreme Court on millions of American women has been eroded.

In one fell swoop, the Supreme Court has decided that government has the right to interfere in a woman's private, confidential relationship with her physician, that young women can be forced to bear a child by their parents regardless of whether she is able or willing to carry that child, and that women who have gone through the painful deliberation involved in deciding to terminate a pregnancy can be forced to wait an extra 24 hours before undergoing the procedure. These restrictions represent an outrageous assault by the Bush administration on the rights and autonomy of American women.

I am deeply concerned about the Bush administration's escalating battle against the rights of women. As is so often the case, the women hit hardest will be young, poor, rural women -- those least able to travel to another state to obtain an abortion.

Justice Blackmun rightly said that he fears "for the darkness as four justices anxiously await the single vote necessary to extinguish the light" of Roe. As he understands, President Bush is ready at the next possible opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice who will provide that single vote. It is high time that the nation hold him accountable for rescinding the rights of women, solely to further his own narrow political interests. It is high time that we stand up and say that a small group of men, appointed by men, will not be allowed to determine what is best for women.

I am very proud to be a co-sponsor of the Freedom of Choice Act, which would codify the protections in Roe versus Wade by making them law. It is now up to Congress to see to it that a woman's right to choose is protected. But we must go further. We must go into the voting booth in November and elect a president who supports the fundamental right to choose and who will sign the Freedom of Choice Act. American women, not the government, should make the deeply personal decision about whether to have an abortion. We cannot, we must not, stand for an administration that threatens women's lives, their autonomy, their most basic freedoms.