

If the right of privacy is overturned, I think that basic sense of safety and who we are in our homes and our own lives in our decisionmaking ability is threatened.

Ms. MICHELMAN. Well, Senator, I think it is difficult for most people to really envision a world without *Roe*. I think most people do not understand what havoc is going to come into play, when or if *Roe* is overturned. It is, as I said in my testimony, the right to choose is so profoundly fundamental to every other aspect of a woman's life, her family's life, that if it is destroyed, her life is destroyed. And I am not trying to be overly dramatic here.

It is just hard to describe how it feels to be utterly powerless to make a decision that has such a profoundly all-encompassing effect on not only the woman's life itself, whether she is able to have a job, whether she is able to continue her education, whether she is able to support the children she already has, but that decision affects her economic well-being, her physical and emotional well-being, her family's privacy.

One of the untold stories prior to *Roe* is the story of the numbers of children who were left motherless, because of the deaths of women from illegal abortions or self-induced abortions. It is a world that we do not want to contemplate, honestly.

People say sometimes to me, oh, you are exaggerating, there won't be a back alley abortion industry like there was before *Roe*. Well, they are wrong. The same people who push drugs on our children and our society are the same people who are going to try and take advantage of the desperation of women who face crisis pregnancies.

I think that there will be nothing but chaos in this Nation, when *Roe* is overturned, and I think that is why this right is so fundamental and we must require that Judge Thomas acknowledge that right, or he should not sit on the highest Court of the land.

Ms. WATTLETON. I am a nurse and I am, by profession, a nurse midwife and I was trained in the years when abortions were illegal in this country. I can never forget the desperate faces of healthy young women who suffered from the injury of illegal abortion. I can never forget the odor of infection as these women entered the hospital as a result of various objects being inserted into their vaginas and into their uteri to effect an abortion.

It is for that reason that I do not want to see women face that kind of degradation again. Mostly, I know that those were poor women and that those were my sisters, African-American women, and so I have a very personal and passionate interest in preserving the right for women to have safe, legal abortions that do not kill them.

There is much that is given to romancing the notion that abortion, if given to the States, will not be illegal, and that, anyway, States are involved in a reform process that the Supreme Court decision in 1973 took away from them.

A closer reading of the history will reveal no such evidence. In fact, after a few States in the early 1970's legalized their repressive laws, no other States were able to move, repeal, or reform legislation, and even in those States where there had been some reform, the rules for a woman to get through in order to have a legal abortion were formidable.

So, the notion that States will somehow allow women to have reasonable access to safe abortion is really fantasy and is not reflected by the evidence of history. I think it will once again be a time in which abortion will largely be unavailable to women and that the first to suffer will be poor women and minority women, and affluent women will face the humiliation of engaging in underground and illegal activities, but perhaps they will escape with their lives and their bodies intact.

Ms. KUNIN. Senator, as I try to envision a post-*Roe v. Wade* world, I think the clock would not just go back to pre-*Roe v. Wade*, because before *Roe v. Wade*, while there were many courageous people who had to seek abortions by whatever ways they could, basically, the law of the land did not permit it.

What we have had for the last almost 20 years is that the law within the limited guidelines of *Roe v. Wade* make abortion legal and safe, so you have really had to see change in our society that is very, very profound and has affected women's lives in every possible way, with a true ability to decide when and how many children to have. Women could make other decisions as to their economic standing, their equality as human beings in general, and by eroding or reversing *Roe v. Wade*, I think it will create a kind of tension, a kind of anger, a kind of explosion that we do not fully appreciate.

I do not think this country has in the past taken away rights that it has once previously granted, and to push the clock back I think will create an internal battlefield that will be very, very painful.

Now, in addition to that, I believe the practical impact from the States level will be that you will probably have violence of opportunity to have illegal abortion and you will have islands where it is impossible to have an abortion.

Vermont, I am quite confident, would maintain that right. In fact, we had a case even before *Roe v. Wade*, that Senator Leahy is very familiar with, that made abortion within certain limitations legal.

Louisiana we certainly know today would not. Massachusetts might or might not. Pennsylvania will not, as indicated by the laws they have passed. So, you are going to have tremendous confusion, you are going to have a tremendous distraction in this country from some of the other issues that we should be dealing with, the poverty issues, the housing issues, the other domestic issues. I think there will be a very wrenching and unfair time.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Thurmond.

Senator THURMOND. I welcome the distinguished ladies here today. I have no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Leahy.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was not here when the testimony began. I was at another matter involving Senate duties and was unable to be here, but I listened to every word of the testimony right up to seconds of the time I came through the door, and I was quite moved by it.