

#1373 The Next Phase in the Fight for Reproductive Justice

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast, in which we shall learn about the future of abortion rights and the broader reproductive justice movement in the face of a conservative supermajority on the Supreme Court. Clips today are from AJ+, On the Media, the National Network of Abortion Funds, ABC News's Democratic primary debate, and Capitalism Hits Home.

How The GOP Ended Up Hating Abortion - AJ+ - Air Date 8-4-19

NARRATOR: Is the GOP obsessed with outlawing abortion? The country is witnessing an unprecedented wave of abortion restrictions. But this anti-abortion rights platform did pop up suddenly. The GOP has had to be patient, strategic and aggressive in their tactics. And occasionally say things like this:

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: I've noticed that everybody that is for abortion has already been born.

NARRATOR: Wow. Thanks for that groundbreaking insight, Mr. President. I'm going to break down why the GOP embraced abortion as a core policy and how we ended up with so many abortion restrictions.

First, it may come as a surprise, but the GOP and their supporters weren't always against abortion rights. Three years after *Roe v. Wade*, a landmark Supreme Court case that made abortion legal in the United States was decided, public opinion polls actually showed that, on average, Republican voters supported abortion rights more than Democrats.

MARY ZIEGLER: Well historically, neither party was really pro-choice or pro-life. And there were politicians in either party who could be found in each camp.

So there were lots of Catholic pro-life Democrats, like a presidential candidate, Joe Biden, at one time opposed abortion.

NARRATOR: Republican First Lady Betty Ford called *Roe V. Wade* a great, great decision. And Republican Vice President Nelson Rockefeller had campaigned for abortion rights in New York. Even the chair of the Republican National Committee was pro abortion rights.

Despite this, in the mid seventies, something started to happen in the GOP.

MARY ZIEGLER: Three or four years after *Roe V. Wade* was passed, the GOP was definitely moving toward a more antiabortion position. So the GOP Republican platform in 1976, for example, had some language about supporting the efforts of people who wanted to ban abortion through a constitutional amendment.

NARRATOR: Abortion really started becoming a core issue for the GOP when this guy got into office.

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: Is an unborn child a human being? I happen to believe it is.

MARY ZIEGLER: It really changed in 1980, in part that was because Ronald Reagan was the first candidate to really make abortion a major issue. He was trying to capitalize on something that I think Richard Nixon had identified earlier in the seventies, which was that there were lots of traditionally Democratic voters -- these were often Catholics or evangelical Protestants who were blue collar, may have been part of a union, generally voted for Democrats because they thought the Democrats fought for the little guy -- and Reagan thought that those voters could be peeled off if people in the GOP appealed to their views on issues like abortion.

NARRATOR: Fortunately for Reagan, his presidency coincided with another movement gaining momentum.

MARY ZIEGLER: This was also significantly the time when the religious right was mobilizing. So you began to see groups like the Moral Majority, trying to bring evangelical Protestants into politics in a way that really hadn't been true before. So the GOP thought it would be important to present itself, as the GOP put it, as the party of life.

NARRATOR: The GOP's appeal to social conservatives like conservative Catholics and evangelicals kept growing, and both the party's leadership and base began to change. By 2009, only 12% of self-identifying Republicans supported abortion in all circumstances.

Now all the new abortion restrictions passed in 2019 are actually the outcome of a legal fight that intensified during the Obama presidency, specifically the 2010 state legislature elections. In 2010, years after Obama became president, over 1,000 state senate seats and almost 5,000 state house seats were up for reelection

DAVID DALEY: 2010 was a huge Republican wave year. And a lot of that could have been predicted in advance. You know, simply put, a lot of Democrats were under the belief that because they had elected Barack Obama in 2008, maybe they didn't have to show up at the polls in 2010.

NARRATOR: The GOP was victorious. In fact, they did so well they literally made history. The sweep gave Republicans their largest number of seats since the Great Depression. They flipped 20 chambers. That means either a state's house or a state's senate went from blue to red. By the end of election night, they had seized control of the entire legislature, so both a state's house and a state's senate, in 25 States. One state they gained full control over was Alabama.

DAVID DALEY: I would actually trace this back to 2008 when Democrats had a huge year, elected Barack Obama president and took over US Senate, the US House. A lot of people thought that the Democrats in this country were going to ride a wave of changing American demographics to become the majority party here for a generation to come.

And it didn't exactly turn out that way, did it? This is because Republicans realized that the 2010 elections could be much more consequential, even historic.

NARRATOR: Why historic? Because the year that the state legislative elections took place was the same year that the census was undertaken. Once every 10 years after the latest census, states redraw the boundaries of their legislative districts. And that's a big deal.

In 2010 political strategist Karl Rove wrote an op-ed that was subtitled, "He who controls re-districting can control Congress." And guess who controls redistricting in most states? State legislatures.

DAVID DALEY: What the Republicans understood was that control of state legislatures, these most important chambers in a state, as far as the state house, the state senate, the most local level of representation is important because those people also draw the congressional lines in this country.

Republicans thought all of this through. None of this was by accident. They realized that these changing American demographics left them with the potential of being locked out of power around the country for a long time to come. And they saw the opportunity that redistricting presented for them.

NARRATOR: Of course, gerrymandering, meaning to draw boundaries in a way that favors a specific party, has been occurring since like the early 19th century, and both Democrats and Republicans are guilty of it. But after Republican swept the 2010 elections, they were in prime position to readjust the boundaries to favor the GOP.

DAVID DALEY: Republicans thought about redistricting in 2010 in terms of seats at the table. And what they wanted to do was control every single one of those seats.

Ordinarily, if you control the state house, the state senate, or the governor's office, you have a seat at the table. You are inside the room when these maps are being drawn. What Republicans did was they took control of every single seat and they locked the Democrats outside of the room.

Democrats didn't see this coming because this wasn't the way it had worked in the past. They had almost always controlled one of those branches. So they never had to worry about being completely on the outside. Republicans changed the very paradigm. They shifted the entire way folks think about redistricting. And as a result, our politics is not been the same ever since.

NARRATOR: And that's where you start drawing a connection between gerrymandering and abortion laws.

DAVID DALEY: There's a straight line between gerrymandering and these extreme abortion bills. Like just look at a state like Georgia, for example. So Georgia had a statewide election in 2018 for governor and it was extraordinarily close. There were only 55,000 votes separating the Democrat and the Republican. So you would safely look at this and say, this is a pretty competitive and equally divided state.

The trouble is it's not that equally divided.

NARRATOR: Georgia Republicans outnumber Democrats by 30 seats in the state house and 14 seats in the state senate.

DAVID DALEY: There was a poll taken by the Atlanta Journal Constitution, and it found that 70% of the state backed Roe versus Wade. They did not want to see any legislation in Georgia that would undo the abortion protections guaranteed by Rowe versus Wade. But

Georgia's legislature advanced those restrictions anyway. They didn't have to worry about this. And gerrymandering is one of the reasons why.

NARRATOR: Republicans now had the power to take the next step in their abortion fight: restrict abortion access itself. Between 2011 and 2016, states enacted over 300 restrictions on abortions, which accounted for 30% of all abortion restrictions since Roe v. Wade. Just look at this graph showing the number of abortion restrictions enacted per year. Look at the year Roe v. Wade was decided, and then look how the number spikes in 2011, the year after Republican swept the state legislatures.

MARY ZIEGLER: So in 2010, you saw the mobilization in the United States of what was called the Tea Party movement. Tea Party Republicans were almost uniformly, very strongly opposed to abortions, and they took over tons of state legislatures after 2010, and then passed really an unprecedented number of abortion restrictions after they took office.

TEA PARTY CROWD: [SINGING] God bless America.

NARRATOR: Well, States were not directly challenging the legality of abortion, they made it harder for many people to get one.

MARY ZIEGLER: Well, so there are a lot of different strategies that they've used. You see one strategy unfolding in Missouri right now, where there's only one remaining clinic that the state is very likely to no longer license, which would mean there would be no abortion clinics in the state of Missouri.

Another strategy would be to sort of put barriers in the place of women who are seeking abortions, like waiting periods, or laws denying funding for abortion, or other things that would make either abortion more unpleasant to get or more inconvenient to get.

NARRATOR: According to a Bloomberg analysis, clinics that provide abortions have been closing at a record pace. Between 2011 and 2016, 162 clinics closed nationwide while only 21 opened.

So as the GOP severely restricts access to abortion, segments of the anti-abortion rights movement see their final goal, overturning Roe v. Wade, within arm's reach, mainly because the Supreme Court now has a conservative majority. However, the anti-abortion rights movement might be too optimistic. In May, 2019, the Supreme Court blocked Indiana's request to reinstate a ban on abortions based on disability, gender, or race. It Maybe a sign that the court is not eager to fully dismantle Roe v. Wade yet. But even if the Supreme Court decides not to hear challenges to Roe v. Wade, there's no sign that the GOP intends to slow down erosion of abortion access. And there's no sign that the traditionally libertarian party has any plans of breaking up with its anti-abortion rights base.

Body of Law Beyond Roe - On the Media - Air Date

12-13-19

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: So, what are we facing now? She says there are two kinds of attacks on Roe. One is the use of trap laws or targeted regulation of abortion providers. She

thinks the conservatives on the court have a preference for chipping away at access rather than an outright ban.

DAHLIA LITHWICK: Presumably by that theory, they will never write the sentence, "Roe v. Wade is now overturned."

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: The second kind of attack, adopted this year, is much more direct.

DAHLIA LITHWICK: What we're hearing in Alabama, what we're hearing in Georgia, Texas had hearings about whether they could actually have capital punishment for women who have abortions. So there has been this new strain in passing these laws that are just purely punitive. This is not just about abortion anymore. Donald Trump has a nominee up for a federal judicial seat who is opposed to IVF, who is opposed to surrogacy.

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: Since we recorded this interview, that judge has been confirmed.

DAHLIA LITHWICK: I think that we failed to apprehend that the attack on abortion loops in an attack on contraception, on Plan B, even sex education. It's incredibly myopic to think that this ends at six week bans or heartbeat bans. I think this really does include, as I said, objections to even surrogacy. There's a little bit of "NIMBYism" sitting in New York and saying, "well, it's never gonna happen here because we'll always have access." But I think the long game is federal criminal penalties for women who terminate their pregnancies.

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: So fears about the end of Roe miss the bigger picture. Despite wide ranging threats to women's reproductive freedom and legal rights, election after election, confirmation after confirmation, the conversation usually stops at Roe.

The case that every nominee gets ask about Roe v. Wade. Can you tell me whether Roe was decided correctly?

NEWS REPORT: Do you view Roe as having super precedent?

Senator McCain, you believe Roe v. Wade should be overturned. Senator Obama, you believe it shouldn't.

Do you believe that reasonable people can disagree on Roe v. Wade?

Do you think Roe v. Wade changed American society?

Roe is the settled law of the land. Do you mean settled for you?

NEIL SIEGEL: Roe, by the way, is not the law.

JESSICA GLENZA: That last voice was Duke Law Professor Neil Siegel, justice Ginsburg's former law clerk. He's also served as a special counsel to senators during the Supreme Court confirmations, including those of Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch. Siegel says that actually, the law of the land was established not by Roe, but by Planned Parenthood v. Casey in 1992. That case upheld the right to abortion while allowing some restrictions, but it did stipulate

that restrictions could not impose a, “undue burden for women.” Today's court challenges are about that standard set by Casey.

NEIL SIEGEL: I think it's important, not just pedantic, because Casey allows much more government regulation of abortion than Roe ever did.

JESSICA GLENZA: Describe what you think a better question would be beyond, will you uphold Roe vs. Wade?

NEIL SIEGEL: Does the Constitution protect women too, and in what ways? Do restrictions on access to contraception implicate gender equality? How? Do restrictions on access to abortion? Right? What about the treatment of pregnant workers in various circumstances? Because I think it would underscore that it's not simply a litmus test about views on abortion, it's about a much broader constitutional vision in which the parties today, in a very polarized country, really disagree. I mean, why does opposition to abortion among certain religious groups highly correlate with opposition to same sex marriage? Whatever you think about same sex marriage, it has nothing to do with destroying fetuses. So why is it that you have similarly strong opposition? I think it has a lot to do with views about the traditional family and people occupying nontraditional gender roles.

JESSICA GLENZA: There is a term “reproductive justice” which expands the frame beyond Roe and beyond abortion.

LORETTA ROSS: So the elevator speech is the right to have a child, not to have a child, and to raise and parent your children and safe and healthy ways. Implicit in that right is the human right to bodily autonomy, gender identity, the right to control and define one's sex and sexuality.

JESSICA GLENZA: Loretta Ross is a visiting professor at Smith College and she's one of 12 African-American women who in 1994 were eager to broaden how these issues were discussed in the U.S..

LORETTA ROSS: We spliced together the concept of reproductive rights and social justice and created the term “reproductive justice.”

JESSICA GLENZA: In the U.S. abortion argument, relatively little time seemed to be devoted to the lack of options leading up to pregnancy, access to contraception, say or sex education. And even less attention was paid to the challenges women face after choosing to have a child, including limited or no access to maternal health care or child care. And in all this, the U.S. lagged behind the international conversation.

LORETTA ROSS: Well, we came up with the framework three months before the September 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. But when we went to Cairo, what we found that what we were demanding under the U.S. constitutional system was something that the world feminist community was demanding under the human rights framework. That no individual can successfully manage their own fertility in a context in which they're experiencing systemic and sustained underdevelopment. In other words, you can't self-help yourself out of a situation where there's no health care system.

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: So it sounds like you had two realizations during that time. One, that maybe choice was too narrow and the second that you were not asking for as much as your global colleagues.

LORETTA ROSS: Well, that's true. When people talked about human rights in the United States, they basically imagined the tortured prisoner in a jail overseas somewhere. They weren't necessarily seeing the human rights violations that are committed in the United States by either the government, the state, or corporations, or individuals, when people are denied full access to their reproductive decision making. And so we felt it was very vital to bring human rights home and not be limited to the narrow interpretations and the legalistic limits of the U.S. Constitution.

ALANA CASANOVA-BURGESS: Ross is also a founder of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, and she's served as an escort to women and girls who don't have access to abortion where they live and need to travel to other states for the procedure. A 2017 study found that nearly 90 percent of U.S. counties, accounting for almost 40 percent of women of reproductive age, had no abortion clinics whatsoever. And yet, geography isn't the only barrier. She says that imagining Roe is a sacred rampart that guarantees access to abortion has been wrong since pretty much the beginning.

LORETTA ROSS: Well we've always been in a post-Roe world for people who lack access to basic health care. And of course, with the passing of the 1976 Hyde Amendment that set up reproductive health care access, depending on whether or not your health care is provided by the federal government, which prohibits, of course, poor women on Medicaid and the Indian Health Services and in the military from accessing the same reproductive health care, particularly abortion care, that people who don't have their health care provided by the federal government. Since the 70s, we've had a two tiered health care system that is packed with discrimination based on status and class.

JESSICA GLENZA: So should we stop talking about Roe vs. Wade then?

LORETTA ROSS: Well, you don't pull your finger out the dike while you're building a better dam, you know? We still have to talk about it, but we have to also recognize that it's porousness is what allows people to chip away with it.

REVA SIEGEL: I've never thought that the abortion issue was a stand alone issue.

JESSICA GLENZA: Yale Law School Professor Reva Siegel is co-editor of the book Reproductive Rights and Justice Stories. She's got another phrase to denote the broader issue of women's reproductive rights and freedoms. She calls it "prochoicelife."

REVA SIEGEL: The "prochoicelife" framework is asking us to evaluate the stakes. If a state claims to restrict abortion because it cares about unborn life, but it doesn't help a woman who wants to avoid motherhood do so through providing sex ed or contraception, or it doesn't help a woman who wants to become a mother by providing her health care or work-family accommodations, how genuinely or systematically does it really care about protecting life? What are we to make of the underlying value choices there? Are they judgments about women, or are they really commitments to the unborn?

JESSICA GLENZA: Take, for example, the state involved in the latest Supreme Court case.

NEWS REPORT: The attorney general of Louisiana said today, we will not waver in defense of our state's pro woman and pro-life laws, and we will continue to do all we legally can to protect Louisiana women.

REVA SIEGEL: So it's restricting access to abortion, but it has one of the highest maternal mortality rates with respect to childbearing in the United States. With respect to race, the numbers are even worse. Similarly, the state of Louisiana hasn't done Medicaid expansion for pregnant women, that other states have. So there's a point to asking jurisdictions that claim to be pro-life outside the abortion context, how did their policy choices compare with other jurisdictions? There actually are commitments of care that may prove to be purple issues through which we can do coalition politics, even if we can't agree around the abortion issue.

JESSICA GLENZA: So in other words, it's a way to look at the problem, but also a way to find common ground that we may think of as nonexistent.

REVA SIEGEL: 100 percent. For example, when I was in law school, I worked on issues of employment, accommodation for pregnant women. It's ridiculous, but we're still having difficulty with that question. You would think that a country as torn up as we are around issues of abortion would at least managed to get it right with respect to the employment of women when they're pregnant. But it turns out that that's one of the highest issues of employment discrimination that we have. Right now, in Congress, there was finally a hearing for a Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, which would require the reasonable accommodation of pregnant employees. And to this point, the Republican Party has not quite managed to get in line in support of the legislation. The question is, why not? Why wouldn't the party of life commit along those lines? Having said this, I think 27 states have passed these laws at the state level and many are red and purple. South Carolina has passed the law. Kentucky has passed the law. Utah's passed the law. So these are laws that jurisdictions that consider themselves pro-life can get behind. There are grounds where people can come together. And I think it will be a great thing if we found more of those.

Check Your Blindspot 10-9-20

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: Now it's time to take a break from today's topic to play another round of America's favorite political game show...

STUDIO AUDIENCE: CHECK! YOUR! BLINDSPOT!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: That's right, it's Check Your Blindspot, powered by Ground News, the first ever news comparison platform that provides readers with objective data about the underlying political bias in all published news stories. I use Ground News to check my blindspot and quiz contestants on theirs. With us today is our reigning champion, Amanda from Boston. Welcome back to the show.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Thank you. Glad to be here.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: And let's dive right in and get ready for round one.

In whose blind spot is this story?

The opening quote is, "we need to take away children." And the headline is "Jeff sessions and top DOJ officials were 'a driving force behind migrant family separations in 2018'."

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: I mean, this one's pretty straightforward. This is definitely in the right's blind spot. They seem to like to ignore children being kept in cages.

BORED BRITISH ANNOUNCER: Correct.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: That is correct. Kept in cages and separated from their families. Of course. Let's go ahead and move on to round two. You knocked that one out of the park.

In whose blind spot is this story?

"The director of national intelligence is declassifying Brennan's notes, Brennan being the former CIA director, and CIA memo on Hillary Clinton, 'stirring up scandal between Trump and Russia.'"

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Hmm. That's interesting. Cause uh, there's some wiggle room there. Hm. I'm going to go with it's in the left's blindspot.

BORED BRITISH ANNOUNCER: Correct.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: Exactly. And the giveaway is that the current director is declassifying this information right before the election.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Of course.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: And this is the kind of red meat that the right loves. If you're on the left, one of the only stories you may find is from CNN with this headline, "former CIA director accused of there's Intel chief of selectively declassifying documents to help Trump". So Trump has been tweeting about this. He says he wants everything to be declassified, but of course it's all of the parts that make it look like Trump was totally justified in accusing the Clintons of drumming up something that didn't really exist when the ultimate conclusion of all of the intelligence agencies is that Russia was involved. The Trump administration was talking to them.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Why are we still talking about 2016 like it is now? It is amazing that that is what keeps happening on the right. They just want to rehash it, but they accuse the left of wanting to rehash it.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: Right, But not very much interesting stuff has happened since then.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Oh yeah, no, it's been real boring out there. Yeah. We're just craving some big bombshell news.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: So you're two for two. Let's see if you can black this one out with round three.

In whose blind spot is this story?

"President Trump calls for section 230 repeal as Facebook yanks and Twitter tags his COVID posts. Trump posted, claiming the flu is more deadly than COVID-19. Facebook yanked it altogether, and Twitter added a misinformation warning label."

Section 230 is the legislation which indemnifies websites like social media and all websites with comment sections, against liability for content generated by end users, rather than from the company themselves, such as every Facebook post and tweet that's ever existed.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: I mean, again, there's some wiggle room here, depending on which angle you're coming from. I would guess that it's on the left's blindspot.

That was a tricky one. Cause the right likes to rant about how social media is unfair to the president, but the left likes to have these conversations about how to regulate social media.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: Exactly. If the left were talking about it, they probably would want to talk about rewriting that regulation in some form or another, but as they are not really talking about it at all, only the right wing sites are talking about it in the context of accusing social media sites of censorship. But the best article was actually written by Reason Magazine, which Ground News lists as "leaning to the right". I think they are sort of libertarian-ish and their take was in staunch defense of section 230 and the freedom of anyone to say whatever they want on social media pointing out that if Trump were to get his way with the repeal of that section, then he probably wouldn't even be able to tweet that in the first place because the social media sites would have to be vetting every single post that anyone writes, which would cripple the whole system.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Aaagh, sigh.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: So congratulations.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Well, thank you.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: Once again, winner and still champion, Amanda from Boston, thanks for playing.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: Thank you.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT!: That wraps it up for today. It's important to mention that all of today's commentary and analysis is ours alone and not necessarily that of Ground News.

If you'd like to try their service, get a discount on their premium features and let them know we sent you go to ground.news/best. As always, whether for traffic safety or media literacy never forgets to

STUDIO AUDIENCE: Check! Your! Blindspot!

**Everyone Loves Someone Who Had an Abortion -
National Network of Abortion Funds - Air Date 4-16-20**

PADMA LAKSHMI - NARRATOR: Abortion is legal in all 50 States and access to abortion is supported by the majority of Americans, but that doesn't mean everyone who needs an abortion can get one. Access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, largely depends on where you live and how much money you have. Anti-abortion advocates have been working to restrict abortion since the Roe vs Wade Supreme Court decision in 1973, which made abortion legal nationwide. Passed by Congress each year, the Hyde Amendment bans federal funding of abortion. This policy impacts millions of people in the U S, and overly affects people with low incomes and communities of color. The Hyde amendment forces many people with public health insurance to stay pregnant when they do not want to.

Although most people in the U S support reproductive rights, anti-abortion lawmakers have made getting an abortion very difficult. In some places, a person seeking an abortion might be forced to travel several states away, experience delays such as government mandated waiting periods, unnecessary extra clinic visits, and go through more difficult procedures for care. Procedures that could have been easily and safely provided close to their home and their community.

A person traveling for an abortion may need to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars for airfare and hotels, meals away from home, car rental or bus tickets, and childcare, often while having to miss shifts at work because they don't have paid leave. In order to afford an abortion, a person may need to take on extra work, sell their belongings, forego buying groceries or make other sacrifices of basic needs. Someone you love may have to choose between groceries and rent or healthcare.

On top of the political, financial, and physical barriers to getting an abortion, there's a social and cultural barrier that affects many of us. Abortion stigma is so common that a person choosing to end a pregnancy may feel very alone when making their decision because the media inaccurately portrays abortion from TV shows, movies, and music to the many false or misleading stories about abortion in the news. Family, friends, coworkers, and intimate partners may also talk negatively about abortion in ways that can further isolate a person who's making a decision about their healthcare. This leads to people being afraid to tell their loved ones that they want an abortion and need support. The truth is abortion is very common. In order for abortion to be truly an option it must not only be legal, but actually available without the shame.

It's time we work together towards a world where all people have the power and resources to care for and support their bodies, identities, and health for themselves and their families. We need to take the hassle, hustle, and harassment out of healthcare. It's time to change the conversation about abortion, to make it a real option available to all people, without shame or judgment. We all love someone who's had an abortion, whether we know it or not.

All of our lives are affected by abortion access. Organizations like the National Network of Abortion Funds are helping people all over the country to access and fund abortions. The National Network of Abortion Funds believes that compassion is a radical act and that love and acceptance are part of activism. Abortion funds offer support in many ways. They might provide information, money, travel, planning and accommodations, accompaniment or emotional support. People working or volunteering with an abortion fund offer rides to clinics, a place to stay, meals, a hot shower, a change of clothes, childcare, or a hand to hold. Abortion funds are fighting to ensure everyone has the power and resources to decide if,

when, and how to grow their families. Together, we can take the stigma and shame out of abortion and shift our vision to be one of radical love that supports all people in making decisions for their bodies and lives in freedom.

Change starts with you. Talk to your family and friends about why you believe everyone should be able to access abortion. Offer time to organizations that support abortion access. Give money to your local abortion fund to make sure someone in your community has access to the compassion, support and healthcare they need. Everyone loves someone who had an abortion, and everyone has a role to play in creating a future where access to abortion is free from harm and shame.

Voting Is Not Enough: Register Voters & Re-Register Purged Voters in Battleground States via @fieldteam_6 - Best of the Left

AMANDA HOFFMAN - ACTIVISM, BEST OF THE LEFT: You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're informed and angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism: Voting is Not Enough -- Register Voters and Re-Register Purged Voters in Battleground States.

As of the publishing of this episode, we have less than one month left until Election Day, just 25 days. Visit BestoftheLeft.com/2020action to explore our Election Action Guide, which we're calling "Voting Is Not Enough." Because...it's just not.

It's still early October, and voter registration efforts are critical right now. Though the deadlines for a few states have passed, there are still many states - including key battlegrounds - where the registration window is still open.

Michigan, Arizona, Iowa, North Carolina, Colorado, Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania and more are the targets of Field Team 6 - a west coast-based get out the vote organization that strategically partners with over 100 state and national organizations to make the most impact. With multiple phone banking and text banking events and trainings held every single day of the week, there is just no excuse to not get involved.

As we've mentioned before, the Field Team 6 events also include a unique opportunity to talk to purged voters in battleground states thanks to a new DNC tool. These are purged voters who are likely Democrats or Independents, and are mostly younger Black, Indigenous and people of color. The goal is to not only make these voters aware that they have been purged or labeled as "inactive", but get them re-registered and on the rolls again with the information they need to vote.

As you know, Republicans in key battleground states have conducted massive voter roll purges this year which had a major impact on primaries that were held during the early days of the pandemic. In North Carolina alone, Field Team 6 has a list of 500,000 purged voters, so every volunteer is needed.

And remember, trying to undo this assault on voting rights is not just about the presidential election. State legislatures need to be flipped, too if we want to solidify, protect and expand reproductive justice at the state level with legislation.

So, head to fieldteam6.org/actions to check their calendar of events and sign up for a shift. If you're not on the west coast, just a note that Field Team 6 lists the Pacific time first for all events, so adjust accordingly.

And finally, just a reminder that relational voting - or contacting your immediate networks to encourage them to vote - has been proven to be a wildly effective get-out-the-vote strategy. Be sure you are reaching out to your friends and family who may be overwhelmed by being an essential worker, job loss, managing their kids remote schooling or... just everything, and offer to help guide them through the registration process or making a voting plan. Everyone could use a little help right now.

The segment notes include all the links to this information as well as additional resources, and, once again, this segment is available on the "Voting is Not Enough" page at BestoftheLeft.com/2020action.

So, if making sure people are registered to vote in the most important election of our lifetime is important to you, be sure to spread the word about Registering Voters & Re-Registering Purged Voters in Battleground States so that others in your network can spread the word, too.

'It is time to have a national law to protect the right of a woman's choice': Warren - ABC News - Air Date 2-7-20

DAVID MUIR - MODERATOR: I want to turn to the Supreme Court, the balance on the court and the issues before the court right now. President Trump in just the last 24 hours saying we've appointed 191 federal judges, two Supreme Court justices, keeping his campaign promise to shift the court to the right with Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

The Affordable Care Act is that the court, climate change is working its way to the court, and a major abortion case is on the docket this year. Vice President Biden, on the issue of abortion in 2012, you said President Obama's two Supreme Court picks, of them, there was no litmus test. We picked people who had an open mind, did not come with an agenda. And you've said before, we both believe that we should not apply narrow litmus tests to appointees to the Supreme Court.

Let me just ask, would you do it differently as president Mr. Vice President? Would there be a litmus test on abortion?

VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN: If you say the rest of what I said. I said that we're going to not appoint anyone who did not have a view that unenumerated rights existed in the constitution.

That's not a specific test. It's a generic test. And the only reason women have the right to choose is because it's determined that there's unenumerated rights coming from the ninth amendment in the constitution. That's what I said. And I was part of the reason Elena Kagan, who worked for me, we got on the Supreme Court.

I was part of the reason why Ruth Bader Ginsburg is on the court. I was part of the reason why Sotomayor's on the court, and she swore me in. I presided, and I'm the reason why, this right wasn't taken away a long time ago because I almost single-handedly made sure that Robert Bork did not get on the court because he did not think there should be unenumerated rights. Let's get that straight.

DAVID MUIR - MODERATOR: Mr. Vice President, I am aware of what you said there's, which is why I'm asking, would you do it differently now? Would there be a litmus test on abortion?

VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN: Yes. Look, here's the deal. Litmus tests on abortion relates to the fundamental value of the constitution. A woman does have a right to choose.

I would, in fact, if they rule it to be unconstitutional, I will send to the United States Congress and it will pass, I believe, a bill that legislates Roe v Wade, adjusted by Casey. It's a woman's right to do that. Period. And if you call that a litmus test, it's a litmus test, but what I was talking about in the past, so no one gets confused here, is if you read the constitution very, very narrowly and say, there are no unenumerated rights. If it doesn't say to the constitution, it doesn't exist. You cannot have any of the things I care about. Anything of the things I care about as a progressive member of the United States Congress at the time, and as vice president, as a member of society.

DAVID MUIR - MODERATOR: Mr. Vice president, thank you, Senator Warren.

SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN: Look, I've lived in an America in which abortion was illegal and rich women still got abortions, and that's what we have to remember about this. States are heading toward trying to ban abortion outright, and the Supreme Court seems headed in exactly that direction as well.

If we are going to protect the people of the United States of America and we are going to protect our rights to have dominion over our own bodies, then it's going to mean we can't simply rely on the courts. Three out of every four people in America believe, right now, that the rule of Roe versus Wade should be the law.

That means we should be pushing for a congressional solution as well. It is time to have a national law to protect the right of a woman's choice.

DAVID MUIR - MODERATOR: Senator Warren, thank you.

Senator Klobuchar. I do want to come to you and should there be a litmus test? It's an active hall here tonight. I did want to come to you on this question. Is should there be a litmus test on abortion?

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: Um, I would only appoint judges that would respect precedent. And one of those key precedents is Roe v Wade. In addition, in addition, you have got to put it into law. Donald Trump, and I think it's really important to take it to him here, when he was running for election, and this is a case I will make on the debate stage against him, he

actually said that he said that he wanted to put women in jail. He then dialed it back and said, no, I want to put doctors in jail. Is it a big surprise then, we're seeing states like Alabama start enacting laws that would criminalize doctors who perform abortions? It's not. And that is why it's going to be really important. When you look at the overwhelming public support for funding Planned Parenthood, for making sure women have access to contraceptions, to making sure that they have a right to choose, that we make this case strongly and loudly.

DAVID MUIR - MODERATOR: Senator Klobuchar. Thank you.

Mayor Buttigieg, you have signaled that you'd be open to the idea of expanding the court. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had suggested leaving the court as it is saying, "nine seems to be a good number." And in fact, she said, if the number of justices is increased, "it would make the court appear partisan. It would be one side saying when we're in power, we're going to enlarge the number of judges to have more people who will vote the way we want them to." Is Justice Ginsburg wrong?

MAYOR PETE BUTTIGIEG: Well, if all we did was change the number of justices, then I agree with her that that could be the consequence. What I've called for is not only reforming the number of justices on the bench, but structural reform so that some of the justices are not appointed through a partisan process. We cannot allow the Supreme Court to continue to become one more political battlefield as we are seeing today. And the time has come for us to think bigger, not just reforming the makeup of the court as America, by the way, has done several times in our history, but also remember that the founders gave us the power to amend the constitution for a reason, and we shouldn't be afraid to use it.

It's not something you do lightly or quickly, but when it comes to something like Citizens United, which holds that corporations have the same political soul as people, and that spending money to influence an election is the same thing as writing an op ed to your local paper, we need a constitutional amendment to clear that up and protect our democracy.

What Happens When You Restrict Abortion? - AJ+ - Air Date 10-8-19

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: I'm in the home of the birthplace of the blues. More than a century after the genre was created, Mississippi has evolved.

[Newsreel of Elvis] Local boy makes good.

But the grounds that were so fertile for planting new music, haven't been as fruitful for growing prosperity. Mississippi is one of the poorest states in the US, and it has an infant mortality rate 48% higher than the national average. And perhaps that's what makes the country's 20th state a uniquely perfect battleground to explore the nation's long-running debate about abortion accessibility.

COLEMAN BOYD - ANTI-ABORTION PROTESTER: Sowing the flesh by trying to propagate abortion!

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Here, that debate is juxtaposed against overt religious themes, because, at a time when the United States is becoming less religious overall,

Mississippi is tied with Alabama as the most religious state in the nation. Nearly half of the residents attend church service weekly, and 74% of adults say religion is very important. So when opponents of abortion care use religiously themed rhetoric to argue against access...

COLEMAN BOYD - ANTI-ABORTION PROTESTER: There's a day of reckoning before a Holy God and you will be found guilty in his presence, for pushing murder.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: ...it's language that can resonate here in the buckle of the Bible belt.

One of the first things I noticed when I arrived at the Jackson Women's Health Organization, was this loud blaring music that they're trying to use to drown out counterprotesters on the other side of this wall. Let's go in.

The noise is one of many challenges Dr. Sinithia Williams faces.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: I think if someone who does abortion care, it would be naive of me not to think about safety. But that being said, I think as a black woman, I really probably think about safety in a different way than some of my other colleagues.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Williams is one of the people on the front lines of trying to secure abortion access. For her, this is a fight for civil rights in a place that's been the scene of so many civil rights battles.

I met Williams on a humid midsummer's day in a Mississippi parking lot to ensure her safety. She's an OBGYN who has worked as an abortion provider for the last seven years in various states. She's been traveling to Mississippi for a year from her out-of-state home to offer care. She's one of a group of doctors who rotate schedules at the state's only abortion care provider.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: All of our clinicians or physicians actually, who come in to provide abortion care actually are from out of state. And part of that has to do with the extreme stigma and the potential for harassment that they would face if we had a local physician who is actually providing the care here.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Williams is headed to this pastel pink building, which houses Jackson's Women's Health Organization in the eponymous capital city. It offers abortion care only two to three days a week because it has no local physicians.

How did you get into abortion care? What drew you to it?

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: One of the things that really stuck with me was how homogenous the doctors were. All of the doctors were older white men, and they were doing excellent care.

But as a black woman, I was seeing who the patients were that were coming through. And I was really struck by, you know, the fact that there were a lot of black women. a lot of women of color who are coming through.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: The disparity resonated with her so much that she decided to become a practitioner.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: There really was not a lot of separation between many of my patients and myself. When you think about who the people are who are having abortions in this country, they are more likely to be poor. They're more likely to be people of color. And that was very reflective of my experience growing up.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: If the Supreme Court ever overturns Roe v. Wade, abortion in Mississippi would be banned immediately.

Mississippi is one of nine States that passed the strict early abortion ban in 2019.

GOVERNOR PHIL BRYANT: We think this is showing the profound respect and desire of Mississippians to protect the sanctity of that very unborn life whenever possible.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: The restrictions which governor Phil Bryant signed into law in March would prohibit the procedure after about six weeks of pregnancy. That limitation on abortion has a cutoff before you likely realize you were pregnant. A federal judge has blocked the law from taking effect while it's being challenged in the courts.

That abbreviated timeline would have a direct effect on people like Velvet Johnson. The 26-year-old is nine weeks and three days pregnant. That would have put you in a very odd position.

VELVET JOHNSON: Right. Yes.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: It means that you couldn't receive the care that you're getting legally.

VELVET JOHNSON: No.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: What would you have done?

VELVET JOHNSON: I honestly would have used a third party, and obtained abortion pills to go through with the procedure. So even though I couldn't have legally come to a clinic, I honestly would have looked for outside sources.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: People of color make up the majority of abortion patients nationally. Black patients account for 28% of abortions; Hispanic patients, 25%; and 39% of people receiving abortion care are white. In Mississippi, the state with the largest percentage of black people in the country, the statistics look drastically different. 78% of abortion patients in the state are black, and 20% are white. Those numbers are especially telling when you realize the state's residents are overwhelmingly white.

A lot of people wouldn't have felt comfortable showing their face and using their name. Why are you?

VELVET JOHNSON: I'm comfortable because I feel like representation matters. I worked in the corporate world where I was a general manager after six months. I made close to six figures, and I'm still here.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Nationally, black women had nearly five times the abortion rate as white women, and Hispanic women, they have nearly double the rate of their white

counterparts. But why does this racial disparity exist? And what does it mean? The answer is layered and we should probably start by looking at the number of unintended pregnancies.

62% of pregnancies are unintended in Mississippi. It ties Washington DC for the largest percentage of unintended pregnancies in the nation.

Mississippi also has the highest teen pregnancy rates in the US and Mississippians are less likely to use contraception. Johnson says, this is the second unintended pregnancy she's had this year, despite using a combination of contraceptives.

VELVET JOHNSON: I took birth control, use protection. anytime we had unprotected sex, I actually took two plan B's instead of one.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: And then you're still...

VELVET JOHNSON: Still pregnant.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Mississippi has a single abortion care fund, which is part of a network providing financial aid to people seeking the procedure around the nation. Johnson plans to utilize it and other sources to come up with the money for her medication.

VELVET JOHNSON: I'm actually between jobs right now. But, they do have support through three organizations that could help me with funding and my partner will also help with funding.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: And just because the fund is based in a state, that doesn't necessarily mean you have to be a resident of that state to receive aid. For example, the New York City council recently approved funds for low income women who live in the city and, or travel to it, to seek abortion access.

So much about abortion accessibility is based on location, location, location. If a state severely limits abortion access, the burden can be pushed to surrounding regions.

What's the farthest a patient has traveled to seek care here?

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: In this particular clinic, I've seen a patient that's driven from Dallas, Texas.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Texas? It doesn't border Mississippi. To the East of Mississippi is Alabama, which enacted with some are calling the country's most sweeping law. It's a near total ban. To the West is Louisiana and Arkansas, both of which have providers, but also have a mandatory counseling and waiting period. And then there's Tennessee to the North, which is pushing for a total abortion ban with the hopes that its case makes it to the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade.

For some impregnated people seeking abortion care, the closest provider is out of state, in part because of stringent legal conditions. Each trip costs not only time, but also resources and dollars. Those financial tools disproportionately affect impoverished people.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: Getting to an abortion clinic is really about, you have to take time off of work. You have to find childcare. You have to find transportation. If you don't have it,

gas, money, all of those things. And then you may be in a situation where you have to go to your abortion clinic one, two or three times in order to get the safe care that you need.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: 75% of those seeking abortion care are poor or low income. And 49% of those people live below the federal poverty level.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: People with lower income and people of color are more likely to seek abortion care later in their pregnancies. And a lot of that has to do with some of the systemic barriers to access.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: The average cost of an abortion procedure at a health care center is between \$350 and \$950 in the first trimester. That price usually increases during the second and third trimesters.

It also costs more if the procedure is done at a hospital. For many patients, these will be out of pocket expenses because of the limitations of insurance coverage, assuming the patient even has it. Low income women are less likely to have insurance and more likely to have unintended pregnancies regardless of their race.

Johnson is one of those uninsured, low income women. The cost of this procedure is the equivalent to about one month's rent.

How much is this going to cost you out of pocket?

VELVET JOHNSON: Out of pocket? It's going to cost me \$600.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: What else could you be doing with that money?

VELVET JOHNSON: Paying my rent. making sure I have groceries at home, making sure I have gas for work, making sure of just basic needs.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: 11 States restrict insurance coverage of abortion care and private plans written in state. That includes federal plans.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: For most abortions that occur in this country, they are paid for out of pocket. There are limitations, and most states, on Medicaid funds or Medicaid dollars being used to pay for abortions.

In many States, there are actually laws on the books that say, that even private or employer-based insurance policies cannot cover abortion care.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Research shows that women who seek abortion access, but are denied care, are much more likely to experience economic hardship and long lasting insecurity years after they've given birth.

ANTI-ABORTION PROTESTOR: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: I wanted to talk to the anti-abortion activists picketing outside the clinic about the racial and class differences statistics show. And while some of them were very willing to discuss their religious beliefs with me off camera, none agreed to an on-camera interview about socioeconomic impact.

This is an afternoon where Williams already has put in several hours at the clinic. She's still got more and it's the work she wants to be doing.

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: For me it's incredibly satisfying. You know, I think it's really important as a physician to be able to offer the services that your patient needs. Our staff is almost exclusively black women. There is something to be said about black women taking care of other black women and women of color.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: The demographics of the staff and patients here are very different from the racial and gender makeup of the protesters outside the clinic.

During this three day stint, Williams will have seen nearly 50 patients before heading back home and planning a return visit. She sees this work as part of her mission as a healthcare provider,

DR. SANITHIA WILLIAMS: Abortion is a normal part of healthcare. Abortion is sometimes complex. Probably every person knows someone or loves someone who's had an abortion. They just don't know about it.

IMAEYEN IBANGA - NARRATOR: Hey fam, thanks so much for watching. Don't forget to like, share and subscribe. Please let me know what stories you want me to cover next and I will see you next time. Bye.

The Shadows of a Revolution - Capitalism Hits Home with Dr. Harriet Fraad and Julianna Forlano - Air Date 5-31-20

DR. HARRIET FRAAD - HOST, CAPITALISM HITS HOME: Now let's look at the other topic that I'm talking about, which is abortion rights, with a clear understanding that women will have abortions, whether they're legal and allowed and punished or punished and disallowed and forbidden. The difference is that mothers will be forced if abortion isn't allowed or is so restricted by fetal heartbeat that you can't even tell you pregnant until it isn't allowed.

Mothers still abort their children. Because they can't care for them, 'cause they can't afford to take time off from work, because they have too many other children, because they're psychologically already overstressed. And so of course there have always been abortions.

But what the difference is is there's more children who aren't properly cared for. There's more deaths and injuries where women bleed to death from botched abortions. Or do themselves damage. But abortion is always there.

Abortions are legal and paid for with government funds in all the other nations that are listed and every other Western democratic, wealthy nation.

Why are we taking abortion away in America? What's going on here? It is curious to note that the states that most restrict abortion, do the least in caring for mothers and babies, whether it's Ohio, Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi. Those states defend denying women abortion rights on the moral ground that they value life. However, they all have the death penalty. They have some of the most mass killings, the most homicides, the most gun sales.

They're the ones with the highest murder rates. Wait a minute. Are they the ones who value life? What's going on in here?

In order to understand, we have to look at who is behind the denials of abortion rights and of maternity leaves, paternity leaves, parental leaves, and who's pressing for an end to abortion rights for women.

It's the same people. It's the US right wing. Including and very much including the religious right. These people have become increasingly militant. Why? What's their agenda? That's an important topic for this time around Mother's Day.

I think this is what was happening. There's a revolution going on in the United States. It's not a political revolution. It's a revolutionary transformation of personal life and family. How does it work? Well, between 1820 and the 1970s, America was mainly a white country. They slaughtered all the Indians and we had mainly white immigrants. For every generation of white males, they could support a family on a family wage. That was partly because they fought and died for union rights. And it was partly because there was a scarce labor shortage. There was scarcity. In our racist and sexist system, males were hired. White males were given priority and got a supplement for being white and male in our labor force.

Women were supported on male wages, partly because women, even those who had to work outside the home, got about half of what men got for wages. Now, this was never true of minorities. Minority males were never given enough to support a family wage, which is one of the reasons that African American women, although they worked in the most oppressed sectors, domestic labor and low grade industrial labor, were more independent and poor.

That's changed. The overwhelming majority of women in the United States have to work outside the home to survive. White men's wages were exported -- outsourced to countries that make about \$4 an hour at the highest; India, which makes less than that, all of these make less but it's about four, China's the highest at \$3.97 an hour -- they were exported to places without ecological safety restrictions or labor rights.

So American corporations raked it in. And white men were left with the same kind of depressed wages that women got, and women poured into the household because it takes two salaries now to earn less than what one white male earned in terms of real wages, what you can actually buy for your family. This was a blow to the white male who counted on dependent women working to care in their household full time at a full time servant, doing emotional labor for them, understanding them, helping them, doing housework, creating order and cleanliness, doing childcare, doing social work, connecting them with relatives, inviting friends over, and doing sexual labor, caring for their needs sexually. Now, women are coming home and don't want to do a whole second shift of labor, taking care of men in the home, and many men want women to compensate them for their lower salaries and less standing.

This is a recipe for disaster and families are breaking up. Their old roles are economically impossible. The terrain has changed. The majority of US women are now single. And by choice. It's now women who initiate most divorces, 70% of the divorces, and who most refuse marriage. It used to be the joke that men are dragged to the altar. Oh no, not

anymore. Women are rejecting those traditions that meant that they had a second job when they got home.

Other countries like the ones I cited before -- Germany, France, Sweden, Norway -- they have rules and laws that allow a different kind of marriage: a marriage of equals, a marriage of partners who work outside the home and work together in the home. They also have provisions for children. So that it's not only the parents who care for children. For example, France, which is similar to the United States in its racial mix, have universal high quality preschool education starting at three years old, and drop- in childcare for a dollar an hour for children who are less than that. And at their daycares, they have, at every class, a master degree teacher, an associates degree teacher, and in every childcare there's a sick room. So if parents have to work and the children are sick and the parents don't want to take parental leave, family leave days, there's a registered nurse to care for their children and give them pediatric care. They also have paid vacations and paid counseling. That's what every other wealthy nation has.

Why not us? Well, that's a good question. What's happening is the right wing, knowledgeable about the fact that women have to work outside the home, are looking to a family form that was dominant in the Third Reich, a fascist family form in which women had to work in factories up to 60 hours a week, but were still responsible for childcare and care for their husbands and care for their homes. Where women were not equal; men were superior and women had to know their place. Of course, even though they denied abortions, one of the first things the Nazis denied, and they also denied birth control, the birth rate went down because women were so tremendously exhausted from doing their second shift. That's the ideology that women need to serve men. That's the ideology of the Southern Baptist Convention even now; the Convention on Men and Women that women are to be subordinate to men. That doesn't work in terms of two people working, sharing work, and also coming home to a house and children that need care.

So that the right wing is trying to create such terrible social conditions by denying abortion, by trying to erode birth control, of course, as well. And by denying maternity leaves, paternity leaves, family leaves, paid family vacations, while posing as great friends of the family, that they are forcing women into fascist feudal families.

That's not working too well. As it turns out, the divorce rate is greatest in the red states where the religious right has the greatest following, because women refuse, they can't and they refuse these roles of a double shift, being dominated by men who don't support them.

Now, these are struggles around what kind of families we have, whether we have a kind of feudal, fascist family style or an egalitarian communal family style, or an independent family style.

It should be noted that since the majority of American women are single, 42% of children are born outside of a traditional family and women are the poorest adults in our society. Children are the poorest people and motherhood is a predictor of poverty for women because we don't have the benefits that would help women be equals in the marketplace.

Ironically, evangelicals try to suppress sex outside of marriage, and try to force people into early marriages, which is probably why their divorce rates are the highest. Whereas states like Massachusetts, which has full abortion rights and much better maternity leaves and

parental leave provisions, have the lowest rate of divorces. States with the most empowerment for women to get abortions also have the best maternity benefits and family leaves because they are states that are, without declaring it as such, creating the conditions for the new family forms that are emerging, either an independent woman and her children, or people living together outside of a marriage, or a communal marriage where people share labor outside and inside the home. They have the least homicides, the least suicides, the least mass killings, or among the least. They have the least gun killings because they have the most restrictive gun laws. And ironically, the fewest rapes and the fewest divorces.

The struggle for women's rights and mother's rights are really a struggle over family forms, whether it will be what I call the fascist family form, or more independent or communal families. And that struggle is fought out on the terrain of abortion and of maternity leaves -- United States hasn't even gotten to paternity leaves -- and support for communal and independent families or authoritarian, fascist families. It really reflects the kind of choices that are shaping up in America, either for a democratic socialist set of priorities, of social benefits, like maternity and paternity leaves, parental leaves, and after school care and summer care and childcare.

Or a fascist family form where women are supposed to do it all ... and of course, can't.

Summary

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today, starting with AJ+ laying out the history of the GOP pivoting to being against abortion; On The Media explored the growth and evolution of the reproductive justice movement; we heard an episode of our new game show, Check Your Blind Spots, sponsored by Ground News; the National Network of Abortion Funds explained the hurdles and stigma people seeking abortions face, and that the sheer number of people who have abortions means that every one of us likely knows and loves someone who's had the procedure; we heard a clip from the ABC News Democratic Primary debate from earlier this year. And all of that was available to everyone.

But members also heard a couple of bonus clips that everyone else missed out on. Those clips were AJ+ doing another in depth mini-documentary about what happens in real life when abortion access is restricted, and Dr. Harriet Fraad on Capitalism Hits Home described the authoritarian and patriarchal tendencies of societies that restrict abortion. For non-members, those bonus clips I just mentioned are linked in the show notes, and they are part of the transcript for today's episode. So, you can still find them if you want to make the effort, but to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show@bestoftheleft.com/support or request a financial hardship membership. Every request is granted; no questions asked.

Now we'll hear from you. And this message is in response to a discussion that we're having on the Members-only Bonus episodes in which we're discussing American myths as part of an upcoming series I'm working on. But this message is perfectly applicable for everyone to hear.

"One Person, One Vote" is our saddest and scariest myth - Lance

VOICEMAILER: LANCE: Hi Jay,

The saddest and scariest myth in US politics is, "one person one vote." Once the Supreme Court affirmed that this is not generally the case, it added another to the set of tools the GOP can use to hang on to minority power. I am sure they will keep chipping away the few guarantees we have.

Coincidentally, I just read Charles Dickens' "American Notes," based on his visit here in 1842. He mentions two interrelated flaws in this country - slavery and unequal representation. One is tied to the other.

Yes, the claim, "we're a republic not a democracy" is the old Birch Society claim, and they used it to attack the one-person one-vote standard. The Supreme Court has now made it law of the land that we as individuals have no right to a vote. That is part of the overall goal of the GOP to secure minority rule. It also plays into the fact that the desires of the rich and powerful are heard by those in government whether the incumbents are Republicans or Democrats.

If you told the average voter the will of the masses is not heard by those in power, they generally would not be surprised. But if you told the average voter that one-person-one-vote is not enshrined in federal law, they would be surprised to find that it isn't!

You stay safe and awesome.

Final comments on the zombie talking point of us living in a republic rather than a democracy

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Thanks for listening everyone. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Dan, and Ken for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments and thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as 'voicemails.' If you'd like to leave a comment or a question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at [202] 999-3991 or write me a message to jay@bestoftheleft.com.

So, for a little bit more background on the message we just heard from Lance, he is responding to some comments that I made on the Members-only Bonus Episode recently. And I was just sort of ranting, complaining about this old, tired talking point that I've been hearing but not understanding for maybe decades now, like maybe 20 years. I have heard people saying this sort of thing where they emphasize that we live in a republic and not a democracy.

And the way I have always interpreted that is, Who cares? To distinguish between the two is silly because no one lives in a pure democracy. We all live in representative democracies, meaning that people vote, and we have an expectation that our government is going to reflect the will of the majority of the people, but we do it through a representative system rather than a direct democracy system. And to explain that or to insist on making that distinction seems silly because no one's confused about it, and only this weird sliver of

people decide to make a big deal out of that. And so, I was just sort of ranting about that, but my ultimate conclusion was like, what is up with these people? I don't even get it.

And Lance strolls into the conversation and clarifies something for me so nicely by pointing out that it stems from the John Birch Society. Oh, everything is making so much more sense now! And if you're not familiar with the John Birch Society, I'm not going to claim to be an expert, but it's a pretty safe description to suggest that you think of them as the Cold War

Tea Party, maybe with a dash of Q-Anon thrown in. They're hyperconservative and very conspiratorial. Their whole thing is hyperconservative combined with very conspiratorial, and, because it was the Cold War, their focus was of course anti-communism. And so they're still around today, but they don't get as much play; they've sort of been pushed to the side a little bit because other movements, are just a little bit more modern, a little bit more sexy. And so the Tea Party and, and, and these days, Q-Anon have more attraction than the John Birch Society. But, if you're a conservative kook and you think it's a little beneath you to dress up in a tricorne hat or get sucked down the rabbit hole to the point where you decide to take a machine gun to a pizza parlor, if that's just not your style, then you can still join up with the John Birch Society and be super kooky, but feel a little bit better about yourself. You get to dress a little nicer if you want to join that group.

So. I just did a little searching around to get some background information on John Birch and this making a distinction between a republic and a democracy. And I just found a doozy of an explainer video I wanted to share. It's brand new, within the last few weeks or months because it's talking about the pandemic, and what you need to hear or what you need to know is that anything they don't like that the government may do they refer to as democracy and anything the government does that they like, they probably think, yeah, it's doing a good job because it's functioning as a republic. So, it's a nice clever way to distinguish what they like and they don't like, and they don't like democracy. They're really super out-front about it. They think democracy is terrible and would ultimately cause the country to collapse, and I'm not exaggerating. So, to explain, I'll just let this guy do it. He's going to explain the origin of this going back to John Adams, and then because he's from the John Birch Society, you're going to see that he's going to link it immediately to marxism:

JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY VIDEO: Let's quote John Adams our second President on democracy. In a letter to John Taylor in 1814, he said, "Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide. Obviously, Karl Marx knew this since 34 years later, in the Communist Manifesto, he said that the communists needed to win the battle for democracy. In other words, to establish democracies, the communists know that democracies die and can be replaced by a dictatorship after the people have been fooled into allowing things that not only destroy their country but cause the people to come under authoritarian rule. What we are witnessing in the controls imposed by marxists leaders around the country during this pandemic is democracy in action. The majority allowing these leaders to get away with imposing rules and edicts that have no basis in law.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: So, as I said, and as you can hear it, you know, he's a much more respectable kind of conspiracy theorist with a sense of history, and he's done some reading. But in order to come to the correct conclusions, he does what any good follower of Q-Anon would tell you to do, which is to read between the lines. Don't listen to

what people say. If Marx says that we need to win the war for democracy what he obviously means is we need to create democracies so that we can destroy them and turn them into dictatorships.

In this case, I just want to point out, I mean, the whole video is great, and I could spend a long time picking apart the whole thing, but when he talks about — he calls up New York and says the New York is putting in place measures for the pandemic; that they are exercising democracy. That is democracy. What the hell does that even mean? No one voted on what kind of measures should be in place. No one voted on whether we should have a mask mandate or anything like that. So, what? Democracy is just when the government does something, and the people follow the rules or are expected to follow the rules, then that's democracy, I guess? Or, if the government oversteps its legal bounds as the John Birch Society would see it because practically everything the government does is overstepping the legal bounds as the John Birch society sees it, but I guess just doing something like that, having a mask mandate or putting any measures place to fight the pandemic is by definition democracy. So that's that nice, clever turn of phrase; that they just get to make anything that they don't like democracy, and if the government isn't doing things that they don't like, well, then that's because it's a republic.

But to wrap up, I need to explain where this all comes from because you can see where people are really coming from when they are hypocrites about it. And it's not that being the hypocrite is the worst thing in the world. And, you know, maybe you need to change your mind or maybe you need to evolve your thinking or whatever, but when a person does that, then you start to get a sense of where they're really coming from. And that is evident in spades with the John Birch Society and their anti-democracy stance because where it all comes from is a desire for minority rule. What they will say is we live in a republic not a democracy because we don't want the 49% to be bullied around and lorded over by the 51%. But on the flip side, they seem to have no problem with the reverse. They have no problem with minority rule. They have no problem with what's maybe more accurate these days is like the 40% being in charge and telling the 60% what to do. They seem to have no problem with that whatsoever. And so really it's about keeping the right kind of people in charge, about the select, privileged few. And so this was explained quite well in the New York Times in an opinion piece by Jamelle Bouie talking about a little exchange that happened between AOC and a Republican on Twitter in which the Republican brings up this concept of clarifying that we live in a republic, And so, Bouie concludes his article explaining or sort of debunking this whole concept by saying, "What lies behind that quip, In other words, is an impulse against a democratic representation. It is part and parcel of the drive to make American government a closed domain for a select privileged few." Okay. If you're interested, that article title is "Alexandria Ocasio Cortez understands democracy better than Republicans do" by Jamelle Bouie, August 27th, 2019.

And again, thanks to Lance for, for bringing some clarity to that issue. It's it's like I'd been working on a jigsaw puzzle for a good long time, and Lance showed up and said, Oh, are you missing this piece?

So, as always, keep the comments coming in at [202] 999-3991 or by emailing me as Lance did at jay@bestoftheleft.com. That's going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.com/support. That is absolutely how the program survives. Of

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So, coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of Left podcast coming twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.