

THINKING CLEARLY

AFTERROE

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A Five-Part Strategy Moving Forward



John Stemberger

In December of 2021, I returned home to Florida from Washington, DC, after watching the oral argument in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health*. The Supreme Court’s upcoming decision in this case, especially in light of the recent leaked opinion, is likely to severely undermine or completely overturn *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022.

Only days later, I was in the office of the incoming Speaker of the House. I was there to discuss our 2022 pro-life priorities. Moments after the introductory niceties, he directly asked this hypothetical: “The year is 2023... The *Dobbs* case has been decided. *Roe* is overturned—what are you going to ask me to do?”

I was stunned at the frankness of this question, coming from the second-most powerful political figure in our state. I fumbled around and discussed some policy options for him to consider. But I lacked conviction and focus; I should have had a well-thought-out response. I should have immediately cast a clear vision for how we can and should end abortion in our state. But I did not. After the meeting, my vague and meandering response to his question haunted me for months.

This experience helped me to see one thing clearly: I was not prepared to discuss a specific action plan for the very scenario I worked my entire adult life to see. I also realized I was not alone. Many leaders in the pro-life movement (much less elected officials) are not ready to seriously think about a nation free from the ugly shadow of *Roe v. Wade*. This article is an imperfect attempt to propose a strategic path forward in a post-*Roe* world.



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If *Roe* is overturned, this is not the end of the pro-life movement; it's only the beginning. To prepare for that beginning, there are five areas we can address for what, God willing, will be the single-most historic moment in the pro-life movement.

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CARE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

If *Dobbs* overturns *Roe*, the most significant change and impact will be the immediate increase in the number of abortion-minded mothers with unexpected pregnancies who will not have easy access to abortion.

We must be prepared to continue serving them by helping them decide to parent their baby or place the child for adoption. Imagine if all the resources spent to end lives through abortion

policies could be rerouted toward truly supporting mothers, their babies, and families. This future for America is far more hopeful and life-giving.

The pregnancy center movement is a remarkable and unique resource with a widespread physical presence in every state. These centers will need to grow and expand their capacity to handle the increased needs within their communities. Turnkey, franchise-like pregnancy center operations and training need to be developed so that churches and others with resources can quickly start up new centers.

It is our obligation to explore both private and public-sector solutions to support pregnancy centers. Major national leaders need to make themselves more accessible and affordable as speakers



at pregnancy center fundraisers. Major donors must significantly invest in this movement. Entrepreneurs, pastors, and elected officials will need to step up and be willing to serve on the boards of these remarkable local ministries.

Some states currently provide millions of dollars of direct funding to pregnancy centers. However, many centers, especially faith-based centers, are hesitant to take public funding. Centers who accept this funding are required to develop procedures to internally separate faith-based activities from strictly non-sectarian services.



One organization, Human Coalition, has pioneered an effective strategy being used in Texas that mitigates the

concerns of a pregnancy center accepting public funding. Human Coalition receives direct public funding from a state's budget and then uses extensive data to strategically target advertising to abortion-minded women. These women then respond to the ads by calling into hotlines staffed by registered nurses. After screening and counseling, they are directed and transferred to a local pregnancy center as potential clients. That pregnancy center does not need to accept any public funding, but simply agrees to take new clients referred to them by Human Coalition's nurses.



Additionally, a state can extend Medicaid benefits to provide longer assistance to a mother after her child is born. For example, Florida extended Medicaid benefits to a full year after the birth of the child. Some pregnancy centers have become comprehensive medical women's care facilities. The public funds used for Planned Parenthood can easily be used to support these full medical centers.

Here's the bottom line: Without the burden of *Roe* weighing down the nation, resources should be freed up so that every state can welcome new life and support mothers.