



# SACReD

Spiritual Alliance of Communities  
for Reproductive Dignity

## **SACReD Statement on *Dobbs* Decision Overturning *Roe v. Wade***

We at SACReD believe that affordable access to all forms of reproductive healthcare, including abortion, is a moral and social good that enables equality and the well-being of all people. Conversely, state bans on abortion amount to forced gestation and birth and are, therefore, morally barbaric. Such laws, which the *Dobbs* ruling will now allow to proliferate, violate the most basic human rights to bodily autonomy, reproductive dignity, and moral agency. Further, the bans' disproportionate burdens on Black people and other people of color call to mind historical atrocities committed against enslaved and other colonized women. SACReD is working to engage in faith-based culture change to empower congregations to become loving, justice-seeking faith communities that fully support the fulfillment of reproductive moral agency and flourishing for all - join us!

### **Suggestions on How Your Faith Community can Respond**

It is a sad and scary time. We begin by recognizing that many Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, and people with low incomes, have always lacked sufficient access to abortion care. A rollback of *Roe* will make that worse, of course, but there has always been an enormous disparity in access. Many frontline organizations have been calling attention to this injustice for years, with little support. For more about the overall context and goals of this work, we strongly recommend that you read SACReD's "[A Progressive Faithful Response to the Loss of \*Roe\*—and More \(PDF\)](#)". Please feel free to forward this message!

In the immediate aftermath of the decision, there will be multiple opportunities to express our outrage through public actions and statements (many listed via [Bans Off Our Bodies](#)). Also, SACReD partner organization Faith Choice OH is holding an Online Vigil and Healing Space tonight, Friday June 24 at 7:00 PM Eastern time—[please RSVP here](#) if you would like to attend.

We encourage participation in these and other events. At the same time, we know that the necessary work of policy change and culture change will take decades. Therefore our recommendations are focused on the area we believe has the most potential for making a lasting impact: deepening engagement by congregations and faith communities. To build a stronger movement we need to reach a lot more people, and this happens by engaging institutions rather than just individuals.

Below, we offer a handful of suggestions for what your faith community can do to process the grief and anger while also preparing for action. Specifically, we suggest holding a meeting within a week or two of the decision being announced. This meeting would be a combination of spiritual care, community building, centering the most impacted, and action planning.

- **Spiritual care.** A rollback of *Roe* will create enormous anger and grief. It is tempting to let the anger move us quickly to action, but grieving is an important act of self-care and community care. Unprocessed grief can cause long-lasting emotional and physical challenges, and can also destabilize our movements and undermine our ability to move together with strategy and resilience.. Therefore it is important to recognize that reactions can/will vary widely by identity and experience. For people who have not been involved in the struggle—especially people of relative privilege—the grief may feel sudden and there might be a desire to rush headlong into action in ways that ignore the people and work that has been happening for years. For BIPOC+ folks and others who have been engaged in the struggle, the emotional reactions to the *Roe* decision could be very different. Make space to center and support these voices, and to ensure that BIPOC folks do not have the additional burden of also providing emotional care to white people.
- **Community building.** Relationships are at the heart of all successful and sustainable movements. The rollback of *Roe* is the result of a decades-long strategy by right-wing extremists, and it' will take significant time for moderate and progressive people to create change. We need each other to do that, so community building has to be a key part of everything we do. For a structured way of doing so, consider doing the [National Network of Abortion Fund's Heart to Heart Conversations](#).
- **Centering the most impacted.** As we work to build a stronger religious movement in support of reproductive health, rights, and justice, we must center the voices and leadership of those most impacted. Introduce the RJ framework, as defined by [SisterSong, the Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective](#). Draw from SACRED's "[A Progressive Faithful Response to the Loss of Roe—and More](#)" for more framing about the overall context and long-term goals for this struggle. What does it look like to center the most impacted people in your work?
- **Action planning.** Action, of course, is critical. We recommend starting with an asset-mapping process.
  - Internal.

1. What resources (expertise, etc) does your faith community already have related to working for reproductive health, rights, and justice?
  2. What work is your faith community already doing to advance justice and how might repro work be integrated?
  3. What people are not at this meeting that should be in loop? Consider starting the process of [becoming a SACReD Congregation](#). Introduce the [SACReD Principles and Commitments](#) and gauge the level of support for them.
- External
    1. What relationships do you have with other faith communities that are or might be supportive?
    2. What relationships do you have with faith advocacy groups? With abortion funds? With abortion providers?
    3. How could you network with other faith communities in order to approach secular partners (and in particular reproductive justice organizations and other BIPOC-led groups) in a coordinated way that doesn't overwhelm them?
    4. Review the specific actions suggested at the end of SACRED's "[A Progressive Faithful Response to the Loss of Roe—and More](#)." Which actions could you do? What are the risks involved and what's your tolerance for that risk?
  - Identify some concrete next steps.
    1. How will this group communicate going forward?
    2. When will you meet next? Who can take responsibility for organizing that?
    3. How is outreach to other faith communities going to happen? Who's going to contact who, and by when?
    4. What are some manageable initial action items for the group to pursue?

### **For Clergy and other Religious Leaders**

- Reach out to other religious leaders in your area who have or might share similar views. Start (or continue) building a network of relationships to do organizing and practical support.
- Offer prayers for women and pregnant people and the harm many will face in light of this decision.
- Address the decision in newsletters, social media, and/or worship. Consider these ideas for content:
  - Religious freedom - the SCOTUS decision codifies a minority religious position, in direct violation of the Constitutional right to religious freedom. We must continue to emphasize the real meaning of religious

liberty. It cannot be selective, and it cannot allow the views of an extreme minority to be imposed on everyone by the state.

- Connect access to abortion care, and sexual and reproductive health generally, with religious values and principles: Human dignity, love of neighbor, concern for the marginalized, etc.
- Refer to the [SACReD Principles and Commitments](#) and/or the SACReD values: justice, equity, dignity, holistic well-being for all people.