

A HISTORY OF WITCHES

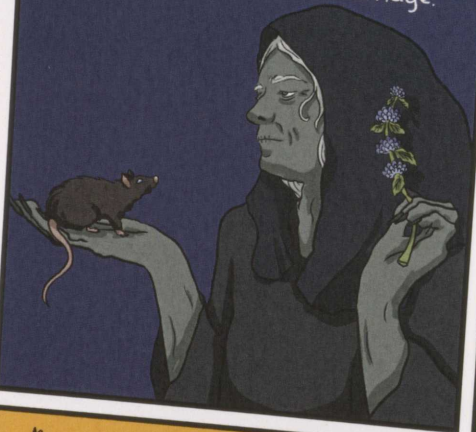
Through all of recorded history, women have been lay healers and midwives, using plants and herbs to treat illnesses, relieve pain, and control women's fertility.



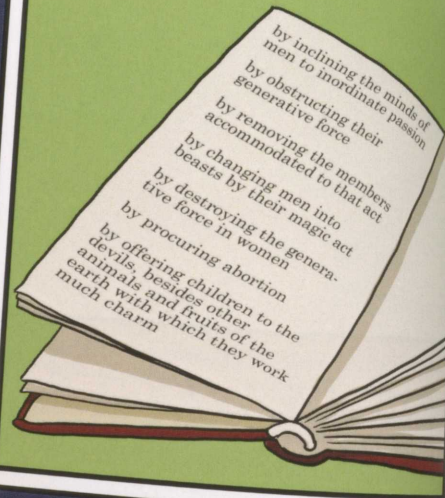
But when men wanted control over the practice of healing, they started calling this women's work "magic" instead of "medicine," and convinced the populace of the destructive, devil-derived power of witches.



Two 15th century books on witchcraft helped cement the gendered stereotype of the witch as an older woman with a fondness for animals who possessed the skills to prevent conception or cause miscarriage.



The Malleus Maleficarum lays out seven ways witches interfere with procreation:



Many women were burned or hanged throughout Europe for administering "potions" that caused miscarriages, and for making pacts with the devil to end unwanted or dangerous pregnancies.



The links between witches and abortion have become apparent again since the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion.



In his decision in Dobbs v. Jackson, Justice Alito cited Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of England.



Even my contemporaries in the 17th century thought I was a misogynist!

Hale's writings are filled with misogyny and rape-denial, but he also firmly believed in the existence of witches, and would instruct jurors that witches were real.



He sentenced several women to death for the crime of being witches. Those records were used as models during the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts.

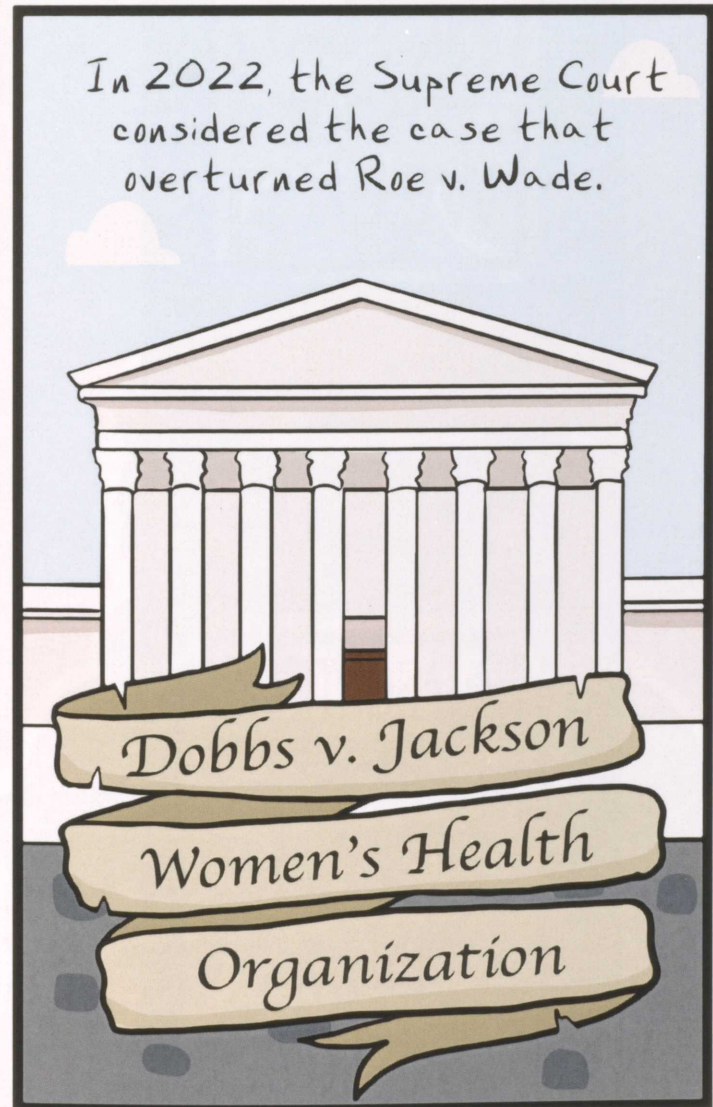


And 350 years later, with the help of Justice Alito, he's still making the world a worse place for women.

WOMEN ARE PEOPLE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT



In 2022, the Supreme Court considered the case that overturned *Roe v. Wade*.



The issue being debated was whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions were unconstitutional.



Mississippi wanted to ban abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

But without the viability line, states became able to ban abortions all together.



Despite the fact that I generally try to practice self-love and keep my blood pressure within the normal range, I listened to the arguments before the court.



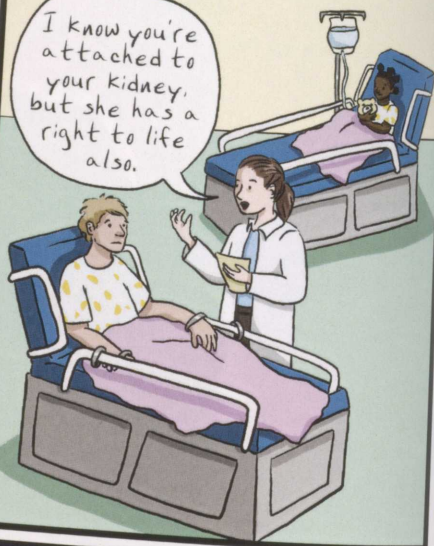
I listened with particular horror to Kavanaugh suggesting that when weighing the interests of a pregnant person against the interests of a fertilized egg, the court should not value one over the other.

The Constitution doesn't give us the authority; we should leave it to the states and we should be scrupulously neutral on the question.



There are no other instances in which the law requires a person to risk bodily harm or use their organs to save another person's life.

I know you're attached to your kidney, but she has a right to life also.



Even after death, organs can't be used for life-saving donations unless express consent was given in advance.

Please respect my bodily autonomy!



While Kavanaugh struggled to weigh these opposing interests, for anyone who thinks women are people, this is the easiest trolley problem ever.



But only if you think women are people.

I assure you, I am a person!

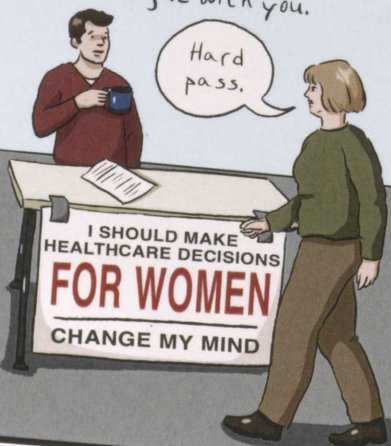


Kavanaugh's discussion of neutrality echoed Scalia, arguing in 2011 that the court should remain neutral on whether women should be granted the same protections as men under the 14th amendment.

Article XIV

Nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

This is where the debate bottoms out for me. If you don't think women and other people with uteri should be entitled to the same freedoms and protections as everybody else, I don't know how to argue with you.



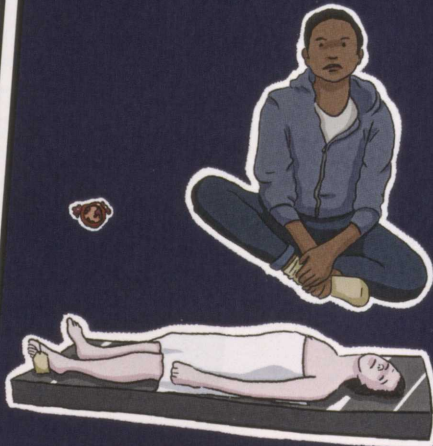
Scalia was arguing that it should be left up to each state to determine whether or not it would consider

WOMEN

to be

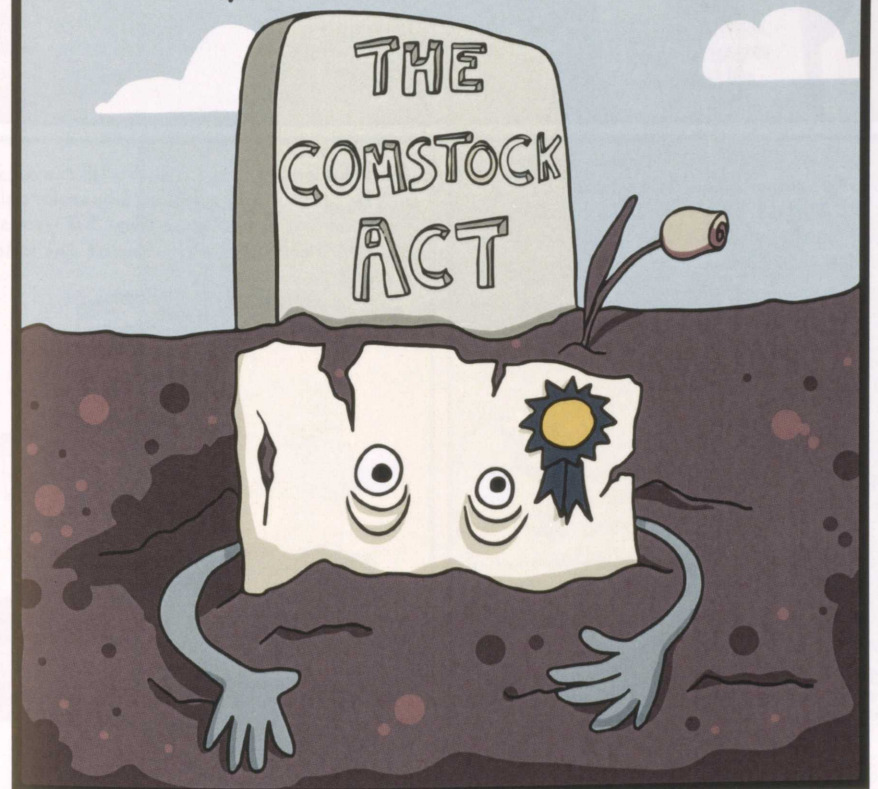
PEOPLE

If you can't plainly see which of these is a person whose interests we should be protecting, there's nothing more I can say.

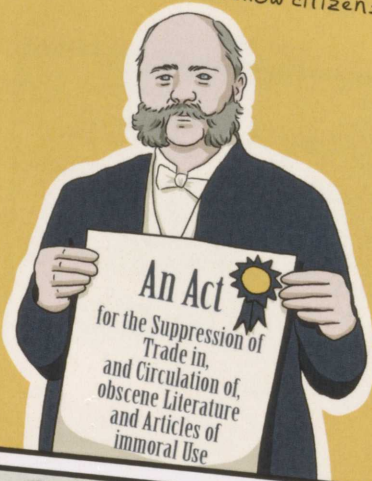


THE ZOMBIE LAW

In their continuing quest to make abortion less and less accessible, some anti-choice activists are trying to resurrect a long-dormant law commonly known as the Comstock Act.



It was drafted by Anthony Comstock, a "vice reformer" dedicated to policing what he considered to be immoral behavior in his fellow citizens.



Passed in 1873, it prohibited using the mail to distribute materials or information deemed to be

FILTHY **LEWD**
VILE **INDECENT**
OBSCENE **LASCIVIOUS**

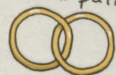
It also explicitly banned posting of any paper, writing, device or substance that "may, or can be, used or applied, for preventing conception or producing abortion."

The Comstock Act was wildly unpopular, even in its time, for its curbing of free speech and privacy rights, and much of it has been repealed through a series of court cases.



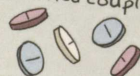
United States v. Dennett (1930) legalized access to information about contraceptives and reproductive health.

United States v. One Package of Japanese Pessaries (1936) determined that doctors had the right to distribute contraceptives to their patients



Eisenstadt v. Baird (1972) established the right to contraception for unmarried people

Griswold v. Connecticut (1965) legalized contraception for married couples



But the parent act itself still remains on the books and, while it's been largely ignored and unenforced for 50 years, it's still technically the law of the land.



Pro-choice politicians and activists have been sounding the alarm about the Comstock Act's potential to severely limit abortion access for decades.

Until the Congress is motivated to renounce Comstockery once and for all, I fear that women will pay a disproportionate share of the price.



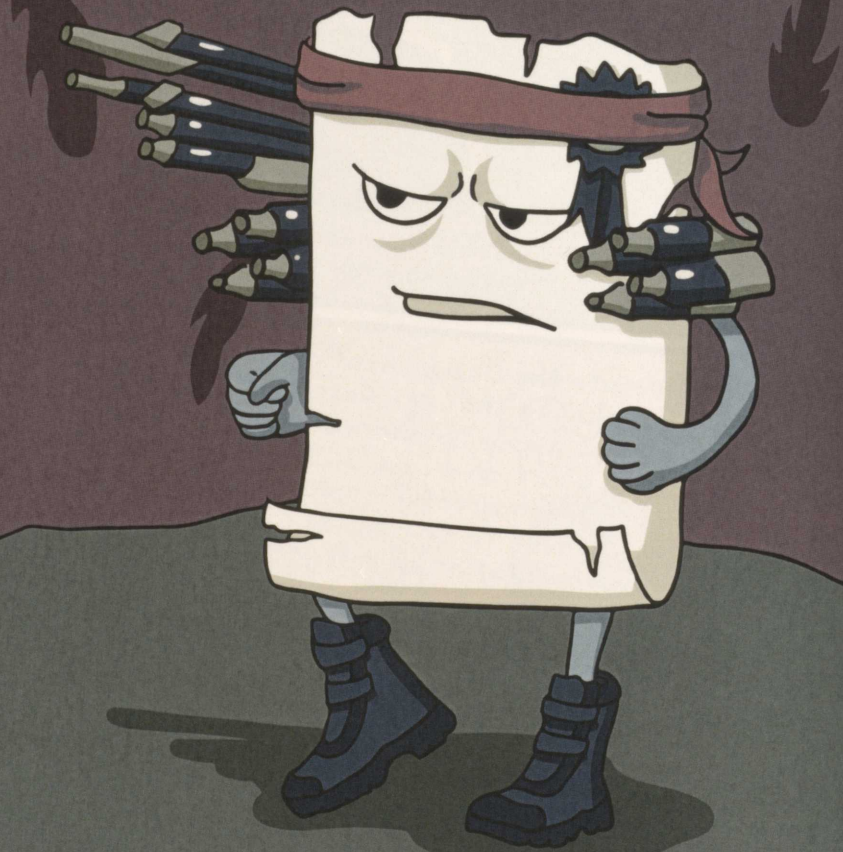
Pat Schroeder, former congresswoman in a 1996 congressional floor speech

Despite the Department of Justice concluding that the Comstock Act doesn't apply to pharmacies legally mailing abortion drugs, Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk directly invoked it in his decision to revoke the FDA's authorization of mifepristone.

The Comstock Act plainly forecloses mail-order abortion in the present.



If this ruling is upheld, the Comstock Act is poised to become a major weapon in the war against reproductive freedom.



The language in the act is so broad, it has been used to ban distribution of information about sexual health and contraceptives, as well as birth control itself.



If radical judges like Kacsmaryk insist on adhering to the 1873 version of the Comstock Act, they could outlaw delivery of any medical instrument or device that could possibly be used in an abortion,



effectively banning it, even in states where abortion is legal.

The Supreme Court has never weighed in on the Comstock Act, but it may be forced to if judges continue to breathe life into this piece of ancient legislative history.



There are plenty of strange, outdated laws still on the books in various states.

16 states can fine or jail you for cheating on your spouse.

In Texas, you must "acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being" to run for office.

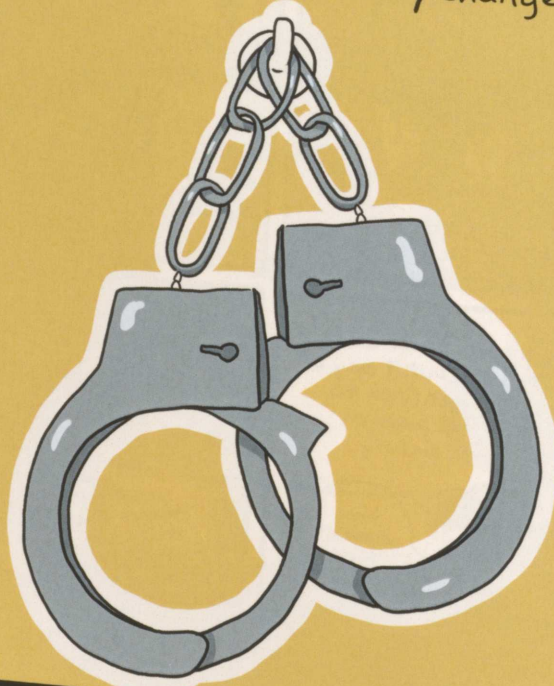
Women in Vermont must have written permission from their husbands to wear dentures.

It's illegal to throw a snowball in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

In Mississippi, you can be imprisoned for 30 days for cursing.

These are relics from a time of moral panic and no one actually enforces them.

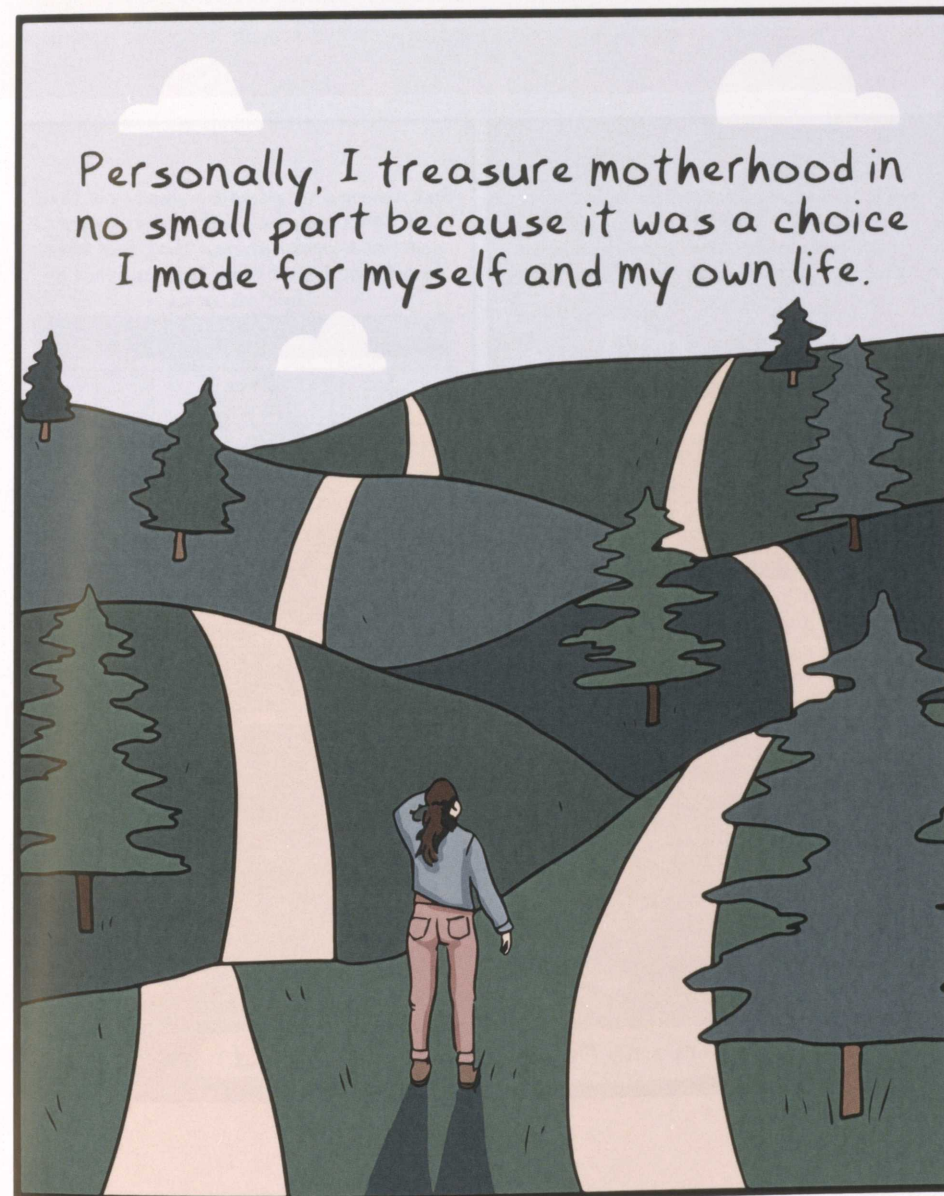
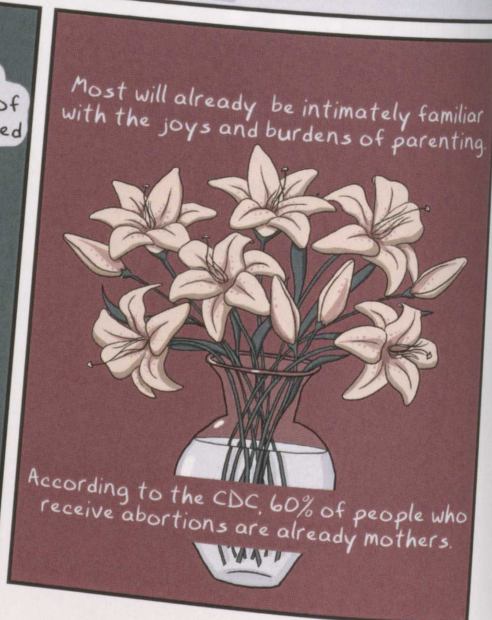
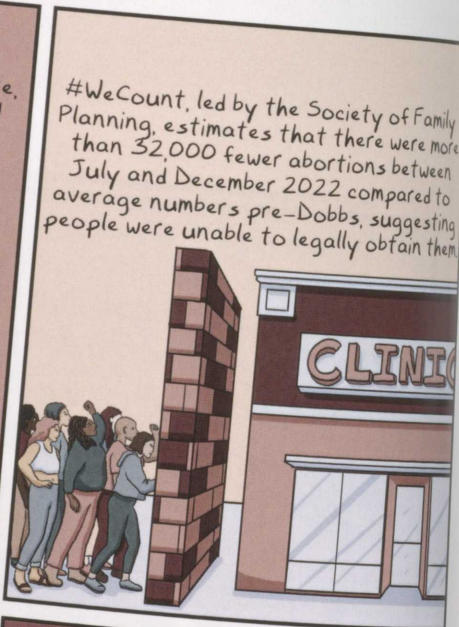
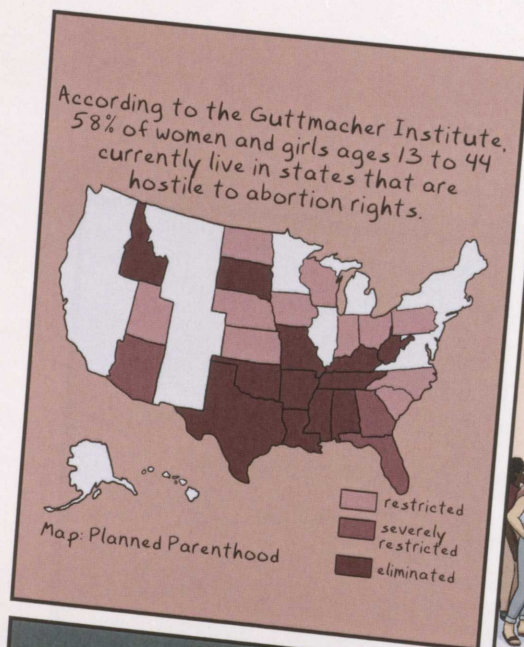
But as conservatives seek to push women's rights further and further back in time, that all may change.



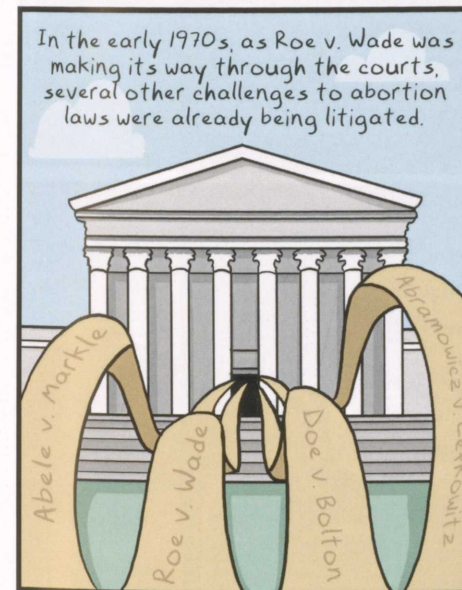
FLOWERS AND CARDS ARE NICE

On May 14, 2023, America celebrated its first Mother's Day since the Supreme Court struck down a constitutional right to abortion.





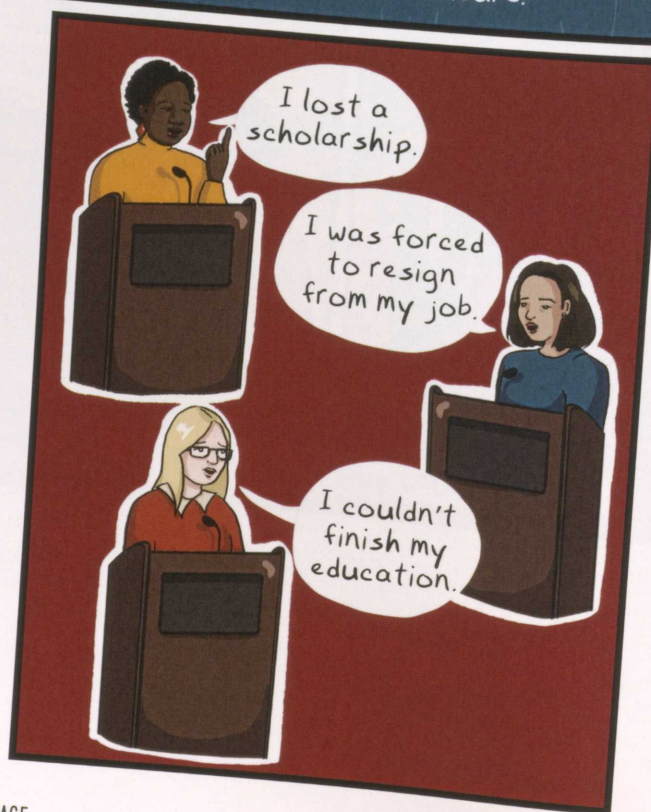
ECONOMIC CASE FOR ABORTION RIGHTS



Women were called to testify about economic consequences they'd suffered by being forced to carry pregnancies to term.



Consequences that men did not have to fear or endure.



Now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned, the repercussions of not being able to choose whether or when to give birth are once again very real.



Data from the landmark Turnaway Study conducted by the University of California San Francisco and concluded in 2016 showed that women denied abortions were four times more likely to live in poverty five years later.



They were three times more likely to be unemployed than women who were able to obtain an abortion.

Researchers also found that those turned away when seeking an abortion had lower credit scores, higher debt, and an increased number of negative public financial records, like bankruptcies or evictions.



But most Americans don't seem to care.



According to Gallup polling between 1996 and 2011, more than 60% of Americans consistently believed that abortion should be illegal if the reason the woman or family was seeking the abortion was that they cannot afford to raise the child.

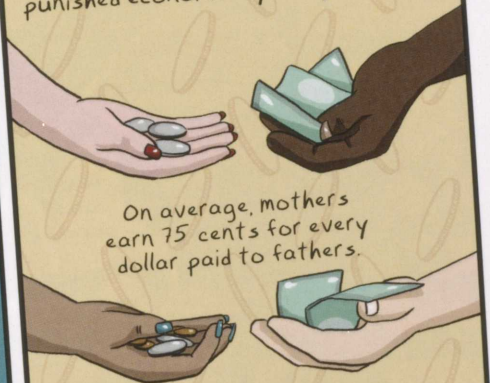
The choice to continue a pregnancy could be less fraught if employers didn't make it so hard to be a pregnant person or a parent in the workplace.

40% of women don't qualify for unpaid maternity leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act.



88% of women do not have access to any kind of paid leave.

Moms in the workforce are punished economically for giving birth.

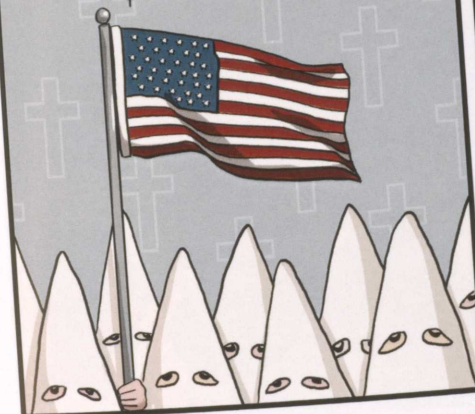


On average, mothers earn 75 cents for every dollar paid to fathers.

These wage disparities are even greater for women of color.

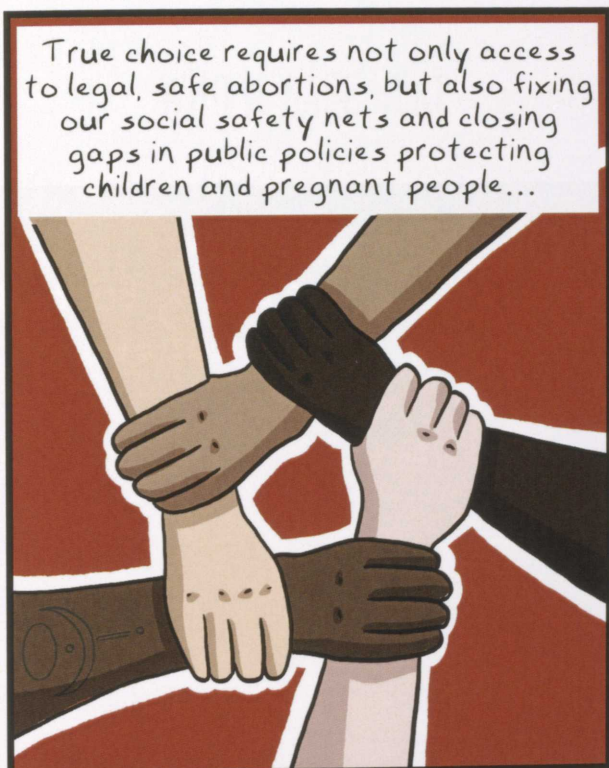
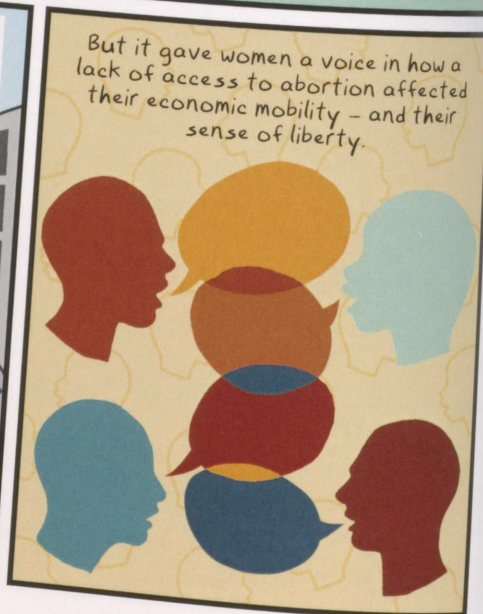
Data from the National Women's Law Center

Part of what makes the economic case for the right to choose so complicated is our country's long history of reproductive abuse perpetrated by white supremacist power structures.



Communities with less economic stability today (like people of color, immigrants, and low-income and uninsured people) carry a history of forced sterilization.





and no one faces dire economic consequences for being forced to carry a pregnancy.



WHO IS SAFE HERE

With Trump's justices packing the Supreme Court, Republican-controlled states raced to restrict reproductive freedom.



In Arizona, state Rep. Walt Blackman introduced legislation that would allow the state to prosecute doctors and people who choose to terminate pregnancies for "homicide by abortion."

If you want to spout, "My body, my body choice," you need to spend some time in our Arizona penal system.

If you are going to kill and end the life of another human being, that is murder.



Texas governor, Greg Abbott, signed into law a bill that prohibits abortion after a "fetal heartbeat" is detected, usually in the 6th week of pregnancy.

no heart yet, just an intermittent electronic pulsing

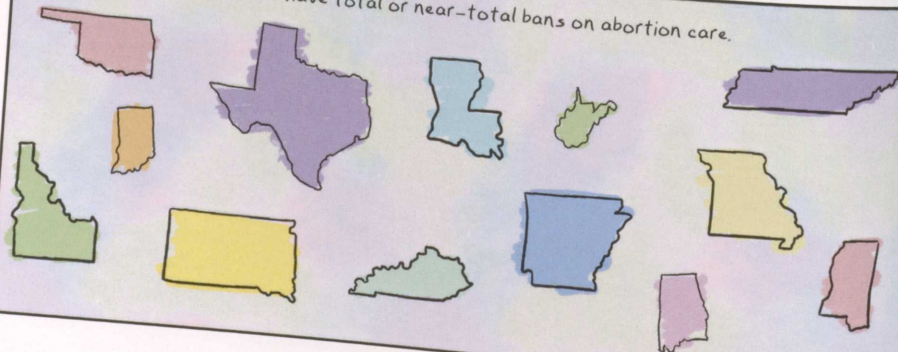


actually still an embryo until week 8

about the size of a grain of rice

There is no exception in the law for victims of rape or incest.

13 states have total or near-total bans on abortion care.



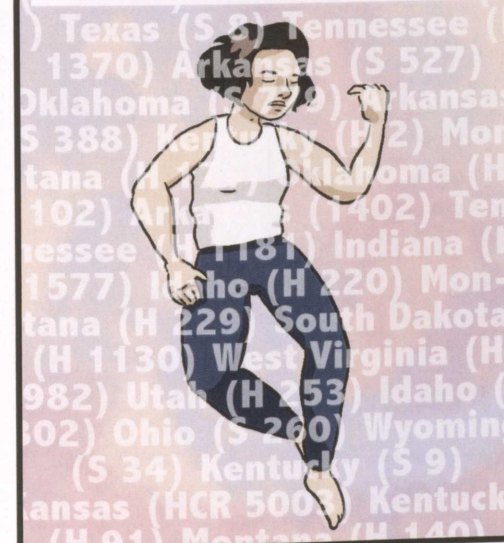
I'm not going to lie, I take this all pretty personally.

I'm not sure we need half a billion dollars for women's health issues.

-Jeb Bush



Every new restriction passed or proposed compounds the trauma of having rules written for my body by people who have never lived in a body like mine.



With every irresponsible, fearmongering mistatement,

"After the baby has come out of the womb alive, in some states, they're killing that baby and calling it abortion."

-Steve Scalise (U.S. Congressman, R-LA)

States where this is legal: Ø

and violent, misogynistic comment,

"If a woman has [the right to an abortion], why shouldn't a man be free to use his superior strength to force himself on a woman? At least the rapist's pursuit of sexual freedom doesn't (in most cases) result in anyone's death."

-Lawrence Lockman (State Representative, R-ME)

absolutely horrifying

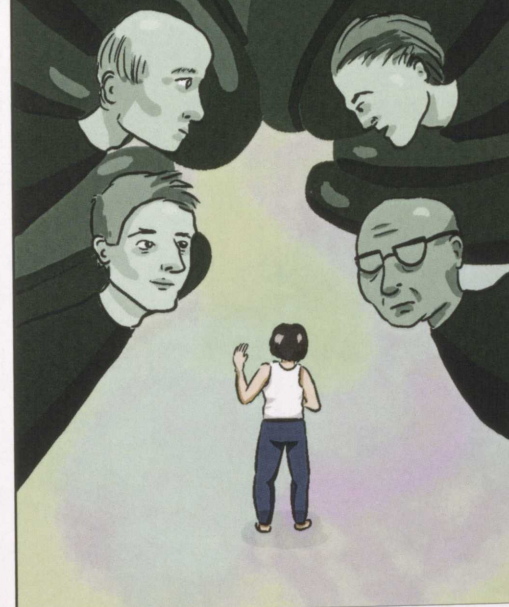
and outright lie,

"If it's legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole thing down."

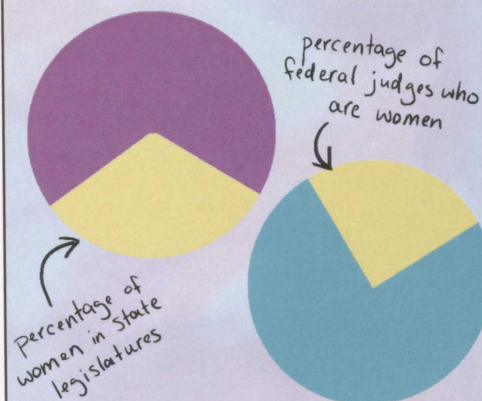
-Todd Akin (U.S. Congressman, R-MO)

According to the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, more than 32,000 pregnancies result from rape each year in the U.S.

And while a big part of me feels outraged by this, what I feel most acutely is humiliation.

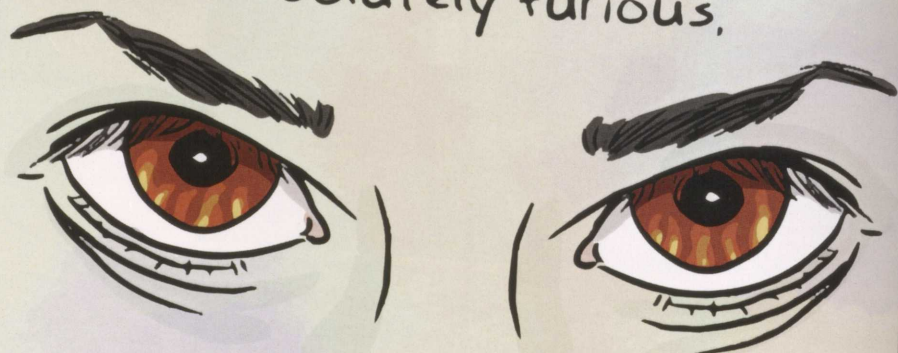


I am reminded of just how willfully ignorant lawmakers remain about the female experience and the female body.



But however uninformed and dangerous these lawmakers and judges are, they may soon have more power over my body than I do.

The fact that those of us who actually have uteri have to listen to politicians playing with house money speak on something that has NOTHING to do with them makes me feel absolutely furious,

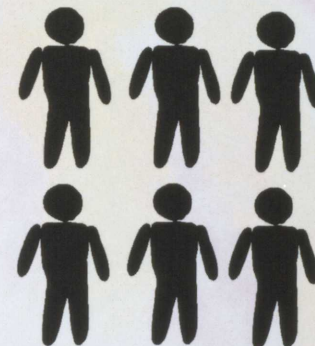


but also very, very small.

I don't think it's fair that legislatures can make laws that only apply to people with XX chromosomes.



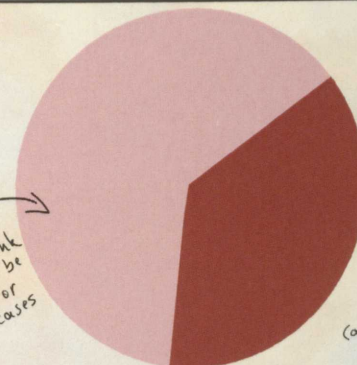
I do not think cisgender men should get to speak on the subject of reproductive rights EVER.



Actual make-up of the West Virginia House leadership that just passed anti-abortion bill H. 2982

But the small handful of (mostly) men in power are free to ignore the feelings of the vast majority of Americans when it comes to abortions.

Percentage of Americans who think abortion should be legal in all or most cases



(according to Pew Research Center)

Because their bodies are safe
from state interference



They don't care if bodies like
mine are not

THE MEN LEARN SCIENCE CHALLENGE

Our country has a real
problem with misunderstanding
female biology—and this has
serious consequences for women.

Senate Candidate Thinks
Women Can Shut Down
Post-Rape Pregnancy

The Gender Data Gap is
Killing Women

The Math Behind the "Six-Week"
Abortion Ban is Nonsensical

WOMEN ARE 50% MORE LIKELY TO BE
MISDIAGNOSED AFTER A HEART ATTACK

So here are some fun ways we
can get cis men to learn science,
even if it's not expressly
about them!

