

Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago today the Supreme Court affirmed the dignity and independence of each American woman. The result of the decision was an understanding that our Constitution guaranteed decisions about a woman's own body should be left up to that woman, in consultation with her doctor, her family, and her religion, not the Federal Government.

There is now a generation of women who do not remember the time before Roe v. Wade, a time when men assumed they could say what women could and could not do about their personal private health care and reproduction.

We still have a lot of work to do. Unfortunately, over the past 40 years there have been numerous legislative attempts to deny this right to women and treat women who exercise control over their own bodies as criminals.

We have to make sure that we defend also Title X, maternal and child health care programs, public access to reproductive health care, and that we reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. But we must remember the time before Roe v. Wade and what is at stake.