

Where Are All Of The Pro-Choice Men?

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BREAKING NEWS

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OPINION

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The Washington Post via Getty Images

A woman holds up a sign in protest on Tuesday during the Senate confirmation hearing for Brett Kavanaugh.

Abortion rights and reproductive freedom are in jeopardy like never before. The Trump administration has proposed radical cutbacks to Title X, the nation's only federal grant for family planning services. And now, with the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the

Supreme Court, *Roe v. Wade* and the right to safe, legal abortion are in imminent danger. A [recently leaked email](#) revealed that Kavanaugh once disputed the description of *Roe v. Wade* as “settled law” and said it could be easily overruled.

The American people have not been silent in their opposition to Trump and his decidedly [anti-abortion Supreme Court nominee](#). [Protests and demonstrations](#) have been ongoing since Kavanaugh’s confirmation hearings began on Tuesday. People are standing outside the hearing room holding signs or wearing T-shirts or “Handmaid’s Tale” costumes. Some are [even interrupting the hearing itself](#).

But almost all of the protesters are women.

Despite unprecedented [widespread support for *Roe v. Wade*](#), the landmark Supreme Court decision that secured abortion as a legal right in 1973, pro-choice men remain largely absent from the larger movement for abortion rights.

Men, have you ever had unsafe sex? Ever had a contraceptive fail? Have you ever dealt with sexual assault? Have you ever faced violence or poverty? Have you ever lacked the economic security to access care or resources you needed? Have you ever faced stigma or shame? Reproductive health and justice affect you, and you should be here on the front lines with us.

Cisgender men may not be able to get pregnant, but they can certainly be responsible for a pregnancy that necessitates abortion care.

Men clearly reap the benefits of comprehensive reproductive health care in their own lives. Yet, women and those with uteruses are continually expected to be the ones in charge of obtaining and paying for contraception.

Pregnancy isn’t just a woman’s issue. Almost everyone will be connected to pregnancy at some point in life, regardless of gender identity. Abortion access is a critical issue that intersects with the fight for [economic](#) and [racial equity](#), with community health, and with the broader movement for gender justice. A recent [NBC/Wall Street Journal poll](#) shows that a record 71 percent of Americans support abortion rights today, the highest level of support in the poll’s history, with only a small gender gap.

Cisgender men are directly connected to abortion and the fight for reproductive autonomy due to their ability to cause pregnancy. They may not be able to get pregnant, but they can certainly be responsible for a pregnancy that necessitates abortion care.

Make no mistake: Our right to control our own reproductive destinies, choose our own futures, and build families (or not) in our own vision is on the line. For low-income people and communities of color who have long faced egregious barriers to the care they need to make these decisions, the future of reproductive health in the United States is even bleaker. These are far from issues that just affect women. And yet, women and the queer community remain largely responsible for our own salvation. And we are fed up. It is high time for pro-choice men to make their voices heard and use their places of privilege in our communities to take a stand for the reproductive freedom that is at stake and affects us all.

We need the voices of pro-choice men to stand up for abortion rights more than ever, and yet they remain noticeably absent from our movement despite their support. This is in stark contrast to anti-abortion men, who make their derision for reproductive autonomy heard by harassing patients seeking care at abortion clinics, finding major platforms for their extreme views, and of course, authoring the very laws that aim to strip us of our care. Justin Bieber, Mel Gibson, Jack Nicholson, Martin Sheen, and former NFL player Tim Tebow are all openly anti-abortion male celebrities who have lent their visibility to the movement against reproductive rights.

Fight for and with us. Not just because you care about 'women's rights' -- but because you understand our liberation and our futures are bound together.

As a culture, we are finally having bleaker and complex conversations about healthy masculinity and the meaning of allyship. The Me Too era has left many men wondering about their role and what it actually means to right the historic wrongs of patriarchy. The answer is multipronged and goes far beyond understanding consent and practicing empathy. To create a world where all people can thrive means a radical reimagining of what we have been taught about gender, liberation and the responsibility we each have in examining our place in society and our resulting role in collective movement-building.

It will take the support of men to shift the cultural narrative on abortion from a “women’s issue” to a broader issue of social justice. As many reproductive justice advocates have noted, the gender divide in the fight for abortion rights goes deeper than the breakdown of who attends rallies in support of Planned Parenthood. The role of men in the fight for abortion rights and reproductive autonomy is to listen and support those who can get pregnant. Amplify our voices. Educate yourself. And show up for us.

Yes, attend a rally but also write to the senator. Read the books. Support abortion funds. Give your time, your energy, your resources to the organizations and the people that are working so tirelessly to fight for our basic human right to exercise control over our bodies and our futures. Uplift us. Fight for and with us. Not just because you care about “women’s rights” — but because you understand our liberation and our futures are bound together.

Abortion is necessary. It is necessary to save lives. It is necessary for people who cannot afford another child. It is necessary for survivors of sexual violence. It is necessary for people who want to put their educations, work and personal dreams before parenthood. Abortion is a safe medical procedure. Abortion is health care. And we will need everyone’s voice to shift the narrative and create a world where each person is able to live a life of dignity, on their own terms.

Senti Sojwal is a reproductive justice activist in New York City.

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