

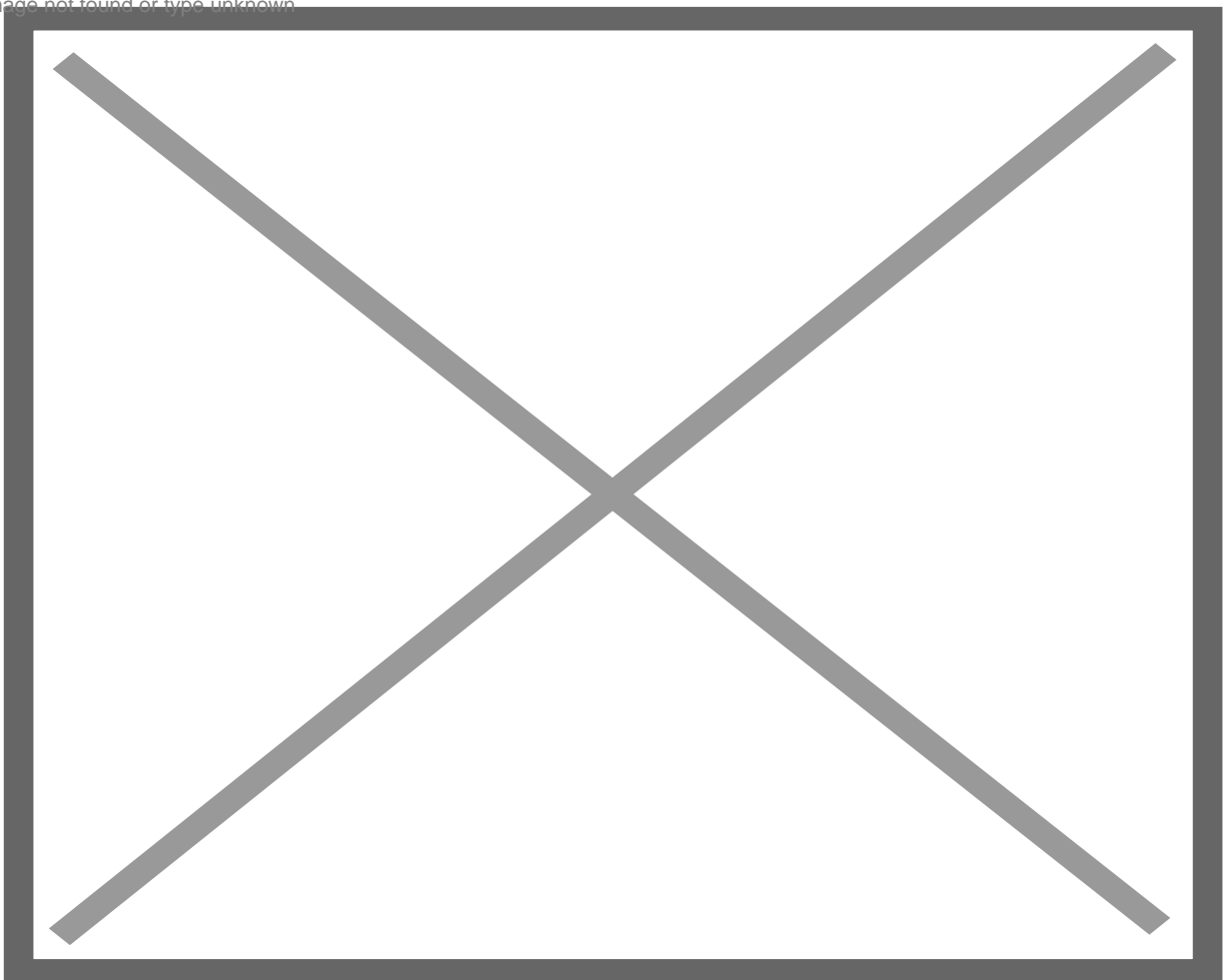
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Roe v. Wade Overturn: Bryan Vows to Veto Any Bill Limiting Women's Reproductive Rights; Plaskett Says Wave of Democrats Should be Elected; Frett-Gregory Calls Ruling Severe Blow to Women

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Leaders in the U.S. Virgin Islands have reacted to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade and sending the decision on women's reproductive rights back to the states and other U.S. jurisdictions. The high court's 5-4 decision led to swift responses from leaders across the country.

Governor Bryan vowed to veto any bill limiting the reproductive rights of women. “Today’s ruling by the Supreme Court is disappointing and concerning. It is disappointing because it represents the Court’s willingness to reverse hard-fought rights and protections of Americans that the Court itself had to affirm decades ago because the laws in some states denied those rights and

protections to certain citizens.

“And it is concerning because it will effectively criminalize abortion and women’s reproductive freedom in at least 20 states. A woman’s right to choose will remain safe and legal in the Virgin Islands, and as Governor, I vow to veto any legislation remotely proposing to make more difficult a woman’s right to make choices concerning her reproductive health,” Mr. Bryan said.

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett called on Americans to vote Democrats into office following the high court ruling.

“Today, the Republican-controlled Supreme Court has taken away from American women the right to make their own reproductive health decisions. It is an alarming and extremist act of judicial activism. It offers a dangerous blueprint for future assaults on some of our most cherished rights. The door is now open to overturn other rights – birth control, same sex and interracial marriage, the list is long.

“With Roe being overturned, radical Republicans are charging ahead with measures to take away the freedom of choice across our country. House Democrats, in anticipation of today’s very sad decision to roll back the basic freedom of choice, has taken necessary steps to ensure that women can continue to make their own health decisions by passing the Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA).

“WHPA would legislatively protect access to legal and safe abortions. We need the Senate however, to pass this vital legislation. If passed in the Senate, President Biden will sign it into law and states will be barred from enacting arbitrary and medically dangerous barriers to care. I am working every day for better health outcomes for women, and policies that will give women more opportunities to succeed and build the future they want for themselves and their families.

“Today’s decision must be the clarion call to Americans to elect a wave of Democrats to keep our democracy safe and quite literally the safety of the American people. Make no mistake: the rights of women and all-Americans are on the ballot this November.”

Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory called the decision a severe blow to women's rights. "Today’s U.S. Supreme Court’s decision has dealt a severe blow to women rights across the United States. “The overturning of Roe v. Wade, ending the constitutional right to abortion that has been in place since 1973, is extremely disconcerting.

"While many states across the nation will face protracted political battles as a result of this ruling, the Virgin Islands have laws in place. Pursuant to Title 14, Chapter 5, abortions are legal in the territory consistent with the tenets of the original Roe v. Wade ruling. This law was enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1973. It is important for the public to understand that abortions in the Virgin Islands are and remain legal. “Women in the U.S. Virgin Islands can be assured that they continue to have the right to choose.

"This decision has far reaching effects and it will potentially harm individuals whose access to healthcare continues to be a challenge. It will disproportionately impact minority and disenfranchised communities. It also highlights the importance of participating in elections. “As a woman, and an elected official, today’s ruling causes me to pause and wonder what next, Voting Rights Act? Affirmative Action? And it reminds me that although we have made significant strides this is a step backward for Americans and women in particular."