



Women's Law Project Files Brief with U.S. Supreme Court in Next Major Abortion Rights Case

PENNSYLVANIA - Attorneys at the Women's Law Project filed an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief with the Supreme Court of the United States in the next big abortion rights case, [June Medical Services v. Gee](#).

You can read or download the brief [here](#).

At issue is Louisiana's Act 620, which mandates that Louisiana doctors obtain "admitting privileges" with a local hospital in order to continue providing abortion care.

"Admitting privileges bills are a legislative ruse to shut down abortion clinics. Our brief explains how this ruse creates a strategic opportunity for anti-abortion street protesters to advance their agenda of trying to shut down clinics," says Susan J. Frietsche, WLP Senior Staff Attorney. "It's a one-two punch: Impose a medically irrelevant bureaucratic obstacle that requires approval from local hospital staff, then let fear of anti-abortion harassment do the rest."

Louisiana officials defending the law argue it will improve patient safety. This claim, however, was already rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court when it ruled a similar Texas law unconstitutional in the 2016 landmark case *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*.

In *Whole Woman's Health*, [a 5-3 majority of the Justices determined](#) "nothing in Texas' record" showed the law "advanced Texas' legitimate interest in protecting women's health." In fact, the Court noted that when asked to name a case wherein admitting privileges, if implemented, "would have helped even one woman," Texas officials admitted they were unaware of a single case. The Court also determined that the Texas provision would force clinics to close because they would be "unable to find local physicians" in part due to "the hostility that abortion providers face."

Louisiana, a state six times the size of New Jersey, currently has only one provider with admitting privileges that would qualify under Act 620. Dr. Doe 3 has testified that his fear of being the sole target of anti-abortion extremists would create an intolerable safety risk and force him to stop providing care.

Between 1977 and 2018, there were 11 murders, 26 attempted murders, 42 bombings, 188 arsons, 100 attempted bombings or arsons, and four acts of kidnapping committed against abortion providers. In 2017, threats of violence or death almost doubled at clinics while

trespassing cases more than tripled from a year earlier, according to the National Abortion Federation (NAF).

“As the highest court in the land already determined, there’s no evidence to support the spurious claim that admitting privileges somehow improves patient safety,” says WLP staff attorney Christine Castro, who co-authored the brief. “But there is an overwhelming record of evidence showing that the fear of anti-abortion harassment and violence influences and intimidates both hospitals making decisions about granting admitting privileges and physicians like Dr. Doe 3, who must decide whether to take on the burden of being the sole local target of harassment after other facilities were forced to close.”

Arguments in *June Medical Services v. Gee* are scheduled for March 4.

For questions or to request an interview, contact Tara Murtha at tmurtha@womenslawproject.org or 215.928.5766.

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The Women’s Law Project is a public interest law center devoted to defending and expanding the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ people in Pennsylvania and beyond.

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