
ANAC advocates for reproductive rights as human rights

In the wake of recent jolting events, including the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* and the resultant executive orders and successful ballot measure in Kansas to protect abortion rights, the tensions between federal and state level policies that impact human rights are at a critical point.

We condemn the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision and related so called “trigger-bans” currently in effect in 10 states (with others looming or in court battles). All will have a devastating impact on our most vulnerable populations, including those living in poverty, particularly in the South and in rural areas. Many fear this ruling has set the stage for more attacks on the rights of women, transgender people, LGBTQ+ communities, people of color and people living with HIV in our country.

ANAC supports the Biden administration's actions to protect a person's right to autonomy over their body. This includes protections for access to FDA-approved abortion medications, protections for emergency care for pregnant and miscarrying women, and data and privacy protections. A second executive order instructs Medicaid programs to cover costs to travel across state lines to access abortions; however, these will likely be subject to state level challenges and barriers. Moreover, the true burden of decreased abortion access includes factors beyond travel costs, such as childcare, time away from work and other responsibilities, in addition to the actual cost of the procedure.

Federal protections are threatened by a powerful minority, out of sync with the beliefs of a majority of Americans. The ballot measure in Kansas is a powerful example of this. Now is the time for us to be vigilant about the impact of national events and equally, if not more important, state-based legislative and ballot measures and local elections. Real threats to human rights are happening at the Supreme Court and at the state house, the governor's office, the local school board and local seats of government.

We must do more than condemn and make statements. We must vote in local, state and national elections for candidates that commit to protecting human rights across racial, gender and sexual identities and stay informed on local decisions on policy and programming. We encourage nurses and other healthcare providers to get involved in local and state advocacy. We are a powerful force for good.

The Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) is the leading nursing organization responding to HIV/AIDS and related co-morbidities and co-occurring conditions globally. Founded in 1987, our mission is to promote the education and development of nurses and others involved in the delivery of health care to persons living with or affected by HIV and to promote the health and welfare of people living with HIV/AIDS around the world.