
M.D. TO BE

Happy 40th anniversary, Roe v. Wade

By **Marianne DiNapoli** on January 18, 2013 at 7:06 AM

The landmark Supreme Court decision that ruled abortion to be a private choice for a woman and her doctor was decided on January 22, 1973. Though *Roe v. Wade* will be 40 years old next week, our country still has a long way to go in making abortion truly an issue of privacy. There are many barriers put in place by politicians that prevent women from having access. For example, 87% of US counties have no abortion provider, 24% of women need to travel over 50 miles to the nearest provider, and the Hyde Amendment prevents federal Medicaid funds from being used to cover abortions for women who cannot pay out of pocket. Despite these barriers, one third of American women will have an abortion in her lifetime.

The safety of doctors who provide abortions is still in jeopardy, even today. This week, I attended a panel of prominent abortion providers from across the country who shared their perspectives on abortion before and after *Roe*. The location of the event was not listed on the invitation, and was revealed only after paying for the event "for security purposes." My identification was verified at the door. On the invitation, only two of the three speakers' names were listed. At the panel discussion, the moderator revealed this was because there had been threats to one speaker's lives, and the event was being monitored by the FBI to protect him. As my husband asked me, "Why can't you go into a career where you're *not* getting bomb threats at your conferences?"

The answer: I am completely in love with OB/GYN. I can't imagine doing anything else besides providing women's health care. While politicians may try to get in the way of allowing us to do our jobs well, there are thousands of newly minted OB/GYNs every July. We are dedicating our lives to defending women's right to access high quality health care, no matter the cost.