

EDITORS' NOTE

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At the start of our term as Editors-in-Chief of Volume 29, we wrote in our new mission statement that the *UCLA Journal of Gender & Law* “situates itself in the evolving and multifaceted feminist movement, attuned to the dynamic challenges facing women and other marginalized genders beyond the walls of legal academia.”¹ In the year that followed, the bedrock of the U.S. feminist movement not only evolved but dramatically shifted beneath our feet. Beginning with the Supreme Court’s grant of certiorari in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* on May 17, 2021,² the fact that *Roe v. Wade* would not see its 50th anniversary crystalized. Throughout the summer, abortion activists, providers, and scholars mobilized to prevent Texas’s S.B. 8 from going into effect on September 1, 2021.³ News of the leaked *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* draft opinion reached us only days before our May 2022 graduation,⁴ meaning that we—two women who have been actively engaged in the reproductive justice movement and seek to incorporate it into our legal practice—have been released into the aftermath of the law’s latest failure to protect women.

In anticipation of the fall of *Roe*, the reproductive justice community is now confronting the question of the best way forward—Is the solution to battle law with law, turning to the state courts and state legislatures to legally enshrine bodily autonomy once more?

1. See UCLA LAW, *Journal of Gender & Law*, <https://law.ucla.edu/academics/journals/journal-gender-and-law> (last visited June 1, 2022).

2. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health*, 141 S. Ct. 2619 (2021) (granting certiorari in part).

3. See generally, J. David Goodman, Sabrina Tavernise, Ruth Graham & Edgar Sandoval, *Confusion in Texas as ‘Unprecedented’ Abortion Law Takes Effect*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 7, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/02/us/supreme-court-texas-abortion-law.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article> [<https://perma.cc/BH9L-SSWR>]. See also Juliet Schulman-Hall, *Youth Activists in Texas Fight Back Against Assault on Abortion Access*, Ms. Magazine (Aug. 30, 2021) <https://msmagazine.com/2021/08/30/texas-abortion-bans-youth-abortion-fund-buckle-bunnies> [<https://perma.cc/T5GC-T8BU>].

4. Politico released the draft opinion on May 2, 2022. See Josh Gerstein & Alexander Ward, *Supreme Court has Voted to Overturn Abortion Rights, Draft Opinion Shows*, POLITICO (May 2, 2022, 8:32 PM), <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/02/supreme-court-abortion-draft-opinion-00029473> [<https://perma.cc/LBH9-QUNW>].

Or has the success of the decades-long conservative effort to gut reproductive rights demonstrated that durable change will come extralegally, stewarded by abortion funds and community networks that help people safely self-manage their abortions?⁵

We offer this special issue of the *Journal of Gender & Law* as our contribution to this dialogue. Our mission statement commits our Journal to the pursuit of “solutions for collective liberation that operate within and beyond the law.”⁶ It is this mandate that prompted us to seek both academic articles and contributions from practitioners in the field of reproductive justice, who can speak to practice more immediately than those involved primarily in academia, to center the voices we seek to uplift. We are grateful to the authors in this issue for their efforts towards realizing reproductive justice for all and for trusting us, the *Journal of Gender & Law*, to share their work with the world.

The contents of this special issue do not present a single way forward. That is, we refuse to concede the terrain of the law to the conservative jurists who project their narrow, politically skewed reading of the constitution on our founding documents. To this end, the issue includes Olivia Roat’s article imagining an embrace of reproductive choice grounded in the Free Exercise clause, as well as Professor Carliss Chatman’s comprehensive examination of legal personhood and the ramifications it entails. At the same time, this issue recognizes the limitations of a battle confined to the parameters of the law. Author Paulina Cohen provides a comparative lesson in political organizing with her examination of #NiUnaMenos, the Argentine grassroots movement that deftly combined direct action in the streets and political lobbying to achieve abortion legalization in the nation’s highest court. Community organizer Larada Lee Wallace grounds the issue in their personal experience, illustrating the lived reality of laws that grant disparate access to abortion across state lines and the reliance on community organizers that landscape necessitates. Blurring the distinction between the legal and socio-political facets of abortion advocacy, attorney Nneka Ewulonu’s essay speaks to the weaponization of a child

5. The *New York Times*’ The Daily podcast investigated this question in a recent episode about the movement to legalize abortion in Mexico. They found that extralegal efforts to get pregnant people the abortions they need and want laid the foundation and created the infrastructure for the legalization of abortion, and continue to persist to bring abortion to those in the margins. See The Daily, *The Mexican Model of Abortion Rights*, N.Y. TIMES (May 17, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/podcasts/the-daily/mexico-abortion-roe-v-wade.html>.

6. *Journal of Gender & Law*, *supra* note 1.

protectionism narrative in the political anti-abortion movement and the need to see through this facade to fight efforts to infringe on individual rights.

This issue wouldn't have been possible without the tireless work, support, and guidance of many people. First and foremost, this issue would not have been possible without the diligent work of the board and staff of the *Journal of Gender & Law*. They masterfully balanced journal work with busy law school schedules as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to devastate the world. We will forever be grateful for their work and perseverance. We would also like to thank Professor Cary Franklin, whose Reproductive Justice seminar we both had the privilege of taking in Fall 2021. While we were producing this issue, that dynamic seminar helped us navigate the evolving legality of abortion in the United States.

