



Raoul Applauds U.S. Supreme Court Decision To Invalidate Louisiana Law That Would Have Jeopardized Safe Access To Legal Abortions

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today applauded a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to invalidate a Louisiana law opposed by Illinois and a coalition of 21 other attorneys general that would have jeopardized access to safe, legal abortions.

Last year, Attorney General Raoul joined a coalition of 22 attorneys general, in an amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs in *June Medical Services v. Gee*, in which a medical provider sought to overturn a decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, which had upheld a Louisiana law requiring abortion providers to maintain admitting privileges at local hospitals. The law at issue was identical to the Texas law that the Supreme Court invalidated in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* in 2016.

The Supreme Court today reaffirmed its ruling in *Whole Woman's Health* and held that the Louisiana law was unconstitutional, as it infringes on women's reproductive freedoms and the right to access an abortion, enshrined in the landmark Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

"Louisiana's law would have jeopardized the health and safety of thousands of women by making access to safe, legal abortions nearly impossible for women in Louisiana," Raoul said. "As state laws continue to infringe upon a woman's right to make her own health care decisions, I will continue to fight these unlawful mandates."

In 2014, Louisiana enacted a law that requires abortion providers to maintain admitting privileges at local hospitals. Had the Supreme Court not struck down this law today, Louisiana would be left with, at most, two physicians at only two clinics across the state who could provide abortion services, despite the fact that roughly 10,000 women obtain abortions in Louisiana each year. Earlier in the case, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana granted a permanent injunction against implementation of the Louisiana law, but, in 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit reversed that decision. June Medical Services and two physicians appealed the decision to the Supreme Court, which granted an emergency application to stay the law from taking effect, pending the outcome of the appeal.

In December, Raoul and the coalition filed the amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court, because states have an interest in ensuring the availability of safe, medically-sound abortion services and protecting the health and safety of women seeking abortion services. Additionally, states have an interest in defending the long-recognized, substantive due process right to choose to terminate a pregnancy and the undue-burden standard that governs review of regulations implicating that right. In the brief, the attorneys general argued that Louisiana's law is an unnecessary and onerous burden that fails to promote women's health and would end up further limiting the number of abortion providers available to women in Louisiana.

Joining Attorney General Raoul in filing the amicus brief were the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.