

Bans Off Our Bodies Rally Held In Downtown Alton

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ALTON - A spirited Bans Off Our Bodies Rally was held in Downtown Alton on Saturday.



The event was organized by Virginia Woulfe-Beile and Missy Ruth Johnson and was held at the intersection of Landmarks Boulevard and Piasa Street in Alton. Planned Parenthood also assisted in the organization of the event.

The rally was described as a pushback against the recent SCOTUS decision to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, which the organizers say put women's lives at risk and restricted women's access to healthcare. A large group attended the Saturday rally. In a historic and far-reaching decision, the U.S. Supreme Court officially reversed *Roe v. Wade* in June, declaring that the constitutional right to abortion, upheld for nearly half a century, no longer exists.

Beile delivered opening remarks and said she and others in the group do not want to go back to the way things were before *Roe vs. Wade*.

Several U.S. states immediately banned abortion after the Supreme Court Ruling. The high court's decision ended a half-century of constitutionally protected abortion rights, which means that states will now be allowed to regulate the procedure.

Emily Ehley also spoke, along with Moji Sidiqi, originally from Kabul, Afghanistan. Moji is the Afghan Community Development Program Manager At International Institute St. Louis.

Moji said currently the women of her birth nation - Afghanistan - currently are not given the right to education, freedom to work, or to make purchases in the markets.

“Women there are not to be seen and certainly not to be heard,” she said. “My whole life I have been told I cannot do things because I am a woman! I was told - and still am - how I should dress, think, speak, smile, and breathe. For the last 23 years, I have subscribed to the American dream of enabling and empowering me to live to my own accord. In the Land of the Free, where women like me have the freedom to do whatever we please, I have done my best to live a life of my own making. “

Moji says women make up the biggest body of voters in the U.S.

“It is time for our country to start looking like it,” she said. “Woe to every backward thinking man and every complacent and not active woman. I do not want to lose any of my rights, so I will fight for them. I do not want any women to lose any of their rights, either. We have a big task on hand. We will not back down until we win what is rightfully ours - Our Bodies Our Choice!”



