Protecting the Right to Abortion Is Critical to Ending HIV

AIDS United CEO Jesse Milan Jr. responds to the leaked Supreme Court draft opinion regarding the right to abortion.

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The following statement is from Jesse Milan Jr., president and CEO of AIDS United:

“The draft Dobbs v. Jackson opinion leaked last night strikes at long held fears advocates have had for the future of Roe v. Wade. The Supreme Court overturning Roe would have devastating consequences for so many.

“As a citizen, I’m offended that Congressional inaction to codify the right to abortion has led us here. As a lawyer, I’m shocked by the leak and by the draft’s outcome of overturning an established right and legal precedent. As an LGBTQ person, I’m worried. And as a person living with HIV, I’m afraid of the potential impacts on the health and wellness of so many in my communities.

“We, as HIV advocates, recognize that reproductive health clinics are often the first touchpoint that people who are vulnerable to HIV have to the HIV health care system. Each day, trusted reproductive health care providers educate the community on how to limit their HIV risk and prescribe the life-changing medications of PrEP and PEP [pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, drugs that prevent HIV]. And yes, they even provide people with information on their choices when it comes to pregnancy.

“These reproductive health care providers were among the first to stand beside us when HIV treatments became widely available. It is our turn, as HIV advocates, to stand in support of these providers and the safety net they grant us each and every day.

“The right to bodily autonomy is a fundamental right. Furthermore, protecting sexual wellness and reproductive care is critical to ending the HIV epidemic. Regardless of the final decision expected in June, we will continue to advocate with partners across the field to protect the full spectrum of reproductive and sexual wellness care, including abortion care, for all.”

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