

# SC Kills Abortion Rights In US

*Overturs Roe vs Wade Ruling, Landmark Case That Was Basis For Legal Abortions Across America For Almost 50 Years; About Half Of All US States Expected To Ban Or Further Restrict Access To Abortion*

Chidanand Rajghatta TNN

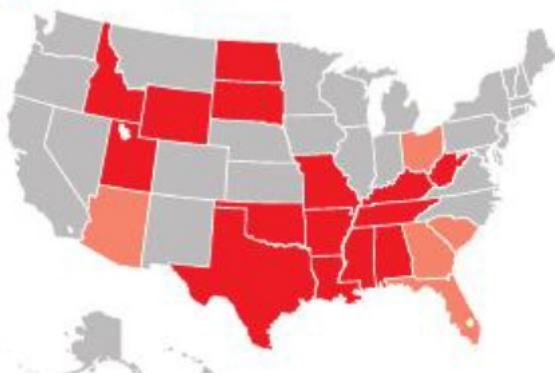
## Washington:

The US Supreme Court on Friday took the dramatic step of overturning the landmark 1973 Roe vs Wade ruling that has been the basis for legal abortions across America for nearly half a century. The court, in a 6-3 ruling powered by its conservative majority, upheld a Republican-backed strict Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks. Widely seen as one of the most consequential decisions by the SC that many women say infringes on their rights over their own bodies, the ruling will result in an almost immediate ban on abortions, with some exceptions, in most conservative, Republican-governed states. The verdict is also at odds with a majority of Americans, who polls show are pro-choice. The verdict came along ideological lines, with the court's six conservative justices, including five men, voting in favour of the Mississippi abortion law, and the three liberal justices (including two women) dissenting. The vote was 5-4 to overturn Roe, with Chief Justice John Roberts writing separately to say he would have upheld the Mississippi law but not taken the step of erasing the Roe precedent altogether. The Conservative justices held that the Roe decision that allowed abortions performed before a fetus would be viable outside the womb — between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy — was wrongly decided because the US constitution makes no specific mention of abortion rights. Led by Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, the ruling said "Roe was egregiously wrong from the start. Its reasoning was exceptionally weak, and the decision has had damaging consequences. And far from bringing about a national settlement of the abortion issue, Roe and Casey have inflamed debate and deepened division." Roe vs Wade ruling recognised that the right to personal privacy under the constitution protects a woman's ability to terminate her pregnancy. The SC in a 1992 ruling called Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania vs Casey reaffirmed abortion rights and prohibited laws imposing an "undue burden" on abortion access. Friday's ruling overturned the Casey decision as well. By erasing abortion as a constitutional right, the ruling restored the ability of states to ban it, fundamentally altering America's landscape on the issue of reproductive rights. Twenty-six states are either certain or considered likely to ban abortion. Mississippi is among 13 states with so-called trigger laws to ban abortion with Roe overturned. Abortion rights activists, who say the court decision will turn women into second class citizens, estimate that 36 million women — roughly half the women of reproductive age in the US — live in about 30 states that will be affected by the ruling. President Biden condemned the ruling, calling it a "sad day" for America and labelling the court's conservatives "extreme". He said the fight over abortion rights "is not over". Biden said his administration will protect access to contraceptives and will do everything in his power to combat efforts to restrict women from travelling to other states to obtain abortions. US attorney general Merrick Garland signalled legal battles. Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the ruling a "slap in the face to women". The SC has become more conservative in recent years with the addition of three appointees made by former President Trump. Within the last week, it has ruled that religious schools are eligible for public funds and struck down gun control laws in New York, expanding gun rights at a time the US is in the throes of a gun violence epidemic. A recent Gallup poll showed only 25% of Americans have confidence in the SC; the number is down to 13% among Democrats. (With inputs from agencies)

# WHERE US STATES STAND

## Prohibited or restricted

● Total Ban ● Gestational limit



20 states; 25.5 million women of reproductive age

## Uncertain

● Dependent on new law or change in party control



10 states; 12.1 million women of reproductive age

## Legal

● Pro



20 states; 12.1 million women of reproductive age

## What Did Roe Vs Wade Say

By a 7-to-2 vote, the **Supreme Court** in **Roe vs Wade** in 1973 established a constitutional right to abortion, striking down laws in many states that had banned the procedure. The court said states could not ban abortions before fetal viability, the point at which the fetus can survive outside the womb. That was around 28 weeks at the time; because of improvements in medical technology, it is around 23 weeks now



## Where World Stands On Abortion

### Countries Where Abortion Is Illegal

According to Center for Reproductive Rights, a global legal advocacy organization, there are **24 countries** where abortion is completely prohibited, including **Andorra** and **Malta** in Europe, **El Salvador** and **Honduras** in Central America, **Senegal** and **Egypt** in Africa, the **Philippines** and Laos in Asia

### Fewer Restrictions

From Japan to India, to most of Europe, Canada and Australia, there are few restrictions other than gestational limits. France, for example, has a gestational limit of 16 weeks, Spain's limit is 14 weeks and Italy's is 90 days. In South Africa and Mozambique, abortion is permitted but limited to the first 12 weeks of pregnancy



### Recently Relaxed Restrictions

- 1 Colombia (2022), 2 Mexico (2021), 3 Ireland (2018), 4 Argentina (2020)

