



In Our Own Voice on Celebrating the 43rd Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Statement by Marcela Howell, Founder and Executive Director

“As President Obama concluded his last State of the Union, his message to the American people was clear, if a little unconventional. He set low expectation of working with the conservative-controlled Congress in his remaining months. However, he set high expectation for the American people. He issued a call to action for all Americans to take our future into our own hands – urging us to fulfill our civic duty by voting, engage in public service, and even protest.

Looking ahead to a year full of peril and opportunity for Black women’s reproductive health, I can say that Black women are already heeding this call.

This is the year we reclaim *Roe v. Wade* for our sisters, our daughters and ourselves, for all Black women for who the right to abortion services is not a reality. And while we join with others to commemorate *Roe* this month, we cannot pretend that the right is enjoyed equally for all women.

So, in 2016, we will double our efforts to ensure that the EACH Woman Act, which would ensure that all women receive insurance coverage for abortion healthcare services regardless of how they receive their insurance coverage, is passed in Congress. We will work with our sisters in the states to eliminate barriers to abortion care. And we will work to educate our policymakers on the devastating impact anti-abortion laws have on the reproductive health of women.

As I look ahead to a monumental U.S. Supreme Court decision and a Presidential election, I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with Black women within the Reproductive Justice movement who refuse to allow politicians to divide our civil rights from our reproductive rights. We are already defining for ourselves what liberation looks like and demanding accountability from politicians to either stand with us or get out of our way.

We demand good schools, voting rights, healthy environments, safe communities – free from state-sanctioned violence, and we demand the ability to end a pregnancy, as well as to have and raise our children.

And when it comes to the right to safe and legal abortion, our voices are needed more than ever. We overwhelmingly believe that abortion should be covered by health insurance (76 percent) and support the right of women to have access to affordable abortion care in our own communities (71 percent).

Our reproductive health, our economic health, the health and wellbeing of our children, our families and our communities are linked. As we fight for one, we fight for all. And this is the year we fight.”