

Sun Sentinel

The Fight Continues for Reproductive Freedom and Women Aren't Going Back

As the Harris-Walz Reproductive Freedom Bus Tour kicks off in West Palm Beach Tuesday, it will remind us all of the continued fight for women's rights everywhere. If you believe in women's rights and access to reproductive health it's clear we can't trust Trump. He has bragged about appointing three justices to the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade and has coyly said the Florida six-week ban is too short then quickly reverted back to the MAGA extreme plan to ban abortion. We can't go back to a time when women in desperation used coat hangers to end pregnancies or subjugated as second-class citizens.

Two major decisions in the 1970s changed the trajectory for millions of U.S. women and their integration into the U.S. economy. In 1972, the birth control pill became legal for unmarried women. In 1973, the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade established the legal right to access abortion.

Women prospered in the 1970s and 80s. Data shows the Roe v. Wade decision had a positive impact on women's financial successes and the overall U.S. economy. Teenage pregnancies and marriages declined. A record number of young women enrolled in four-year colleges. Today more women graduate with college degrees compared to their male counterparts.

Women entered the labor market in record numbers which reduced the number of women and children living in poverty and increased our nation's GDP. Children of this generation became adults who had higher rates of college graduation, lower rates of single parenthood, and less likely to be poor. I am one of those children.

All this success also made women complacent. We expected our rights were firmly established, when in fact, there were always forces who wanted to turn back time and return women to a place with less freedom, less opportunity, and as the handmaids to make babies. Many have given in to the misogynistic impulses of our society.

When I was 18 years old nothing was going to stop me from reaching my goals. Many girls like myself born in the 1970's and 80's, I wanted it all—college, career, children, and financial freedom. I was a first-generation college student who watched my mother raise three children at 27-years old. It's a rewarding privilege to have a family but she sacrificed having a career of her own and financial independence.

Women in the 1950's and 60's fought hard for us and the feminist revolution made our dreams a reality. I earned two degrees and enjoyed a career in tv news and later teaching while raising two children and helping my husband start a family business. Now my 22-year-old daughter has less rights than I do as result of Trump's continuous onslaught to rip away women's rights. I won't idly standby in the face of oppression. We're not going back.

We are teetering on the edge of cliff and the stakes could not be any higher for women in this year's presidential election. On one side of the cliff is Vice President Kamala Harris fighting for women's rights and the other is Trump ready to crush women's freedom once and for all. Trump and his extreme MAGA

followers won't stop at abortion. They will push to take away contraception, IVF, and other liberties. Just read all about it in Project 2025.

When I vote this year, I will think about my daughter and her dreams. I will also think of that 8-year old little girl playing with Barbies and dreaming of becoming a doctor or judge and the 16-year old young women working their asses off to get into a great college and embark on paths filled with lofty goal. The women of today who benefited from yesterday's fight for liberation need to stand alongside Kamala Harris and Tim Walz to continue the fight for women's freedom, independence, and prosperity.

Melissa Shiff

Coalition lead for Florida Harris/Walz

Proud mom of Jordan Shiff- who has fewer rights than I did growing up.

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