

YWCA AMICUS BRIEF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs – Associations with their Stakeholders

How was this decided?

YWCA USA leadership, with the full support of the YWCA USA Board of Directors, decided to stand up for the rights granted in Roe v. Wade by serving as the lead organization on an amicus (“friend of the court”) brief in the upcoming Supreme Court case.

Why now?

The vision of YWCA is a world in which all women and girls, especially women and girls of color, are free from racism and sexism, and can thrive. This case threatens that vision. We are a voice for women and girls, and we cannot sit on the sidelines during this fight.

Has YWCA ever supported Roe v Wade?

Yes, for more than fifty years, YWCA has supported a woman’s freedom to make fundamental decisions about whether and when to have children.

What comes next?

YWCA USA will submit the brief to the court on September 20th. YWCA USA will publicize this effort starting September 20th. Local Associations will be provided a template press release on Wednesday, September 15th and will be encouraged to distribute that press release once the brief is submitted to the court.

Is YWCA now going to be a political organization?

We have been at the forefront of the most pressing social issues for more than 160 years—from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Our organization’s status is not going to change and neither will our willingness to stand up for the communities we serve.

We are taking a huge risk here. Why?

This is a historic moment. Gender and racial equity issues are our issues. The survival and success of young women/women of color (people/people of color) - the people who will be most impacted by restricting access to abortion and other forms of reproductive healthcare – are at the center of our work. We are a voice for women and girls -- this is a historic moment for us to lead boldly on behalf of the communities we serve.

FAQs – Internal from associations

Will anything change at YWCA?

Our mission remains the same: eliminate racism and empower women. YWCA has boldly led, time and time again, to secure rights that are essential to the pursuit of gender, racial, economic, and reproductive justice. That will not change.

Are there other organization-wide changes we should expect?

This isn't a change for the organization - we have stood for reproductive freedom for more than 50 years. We do recognize that this is a bold public stance, but in truth we have not deviated from our past position.

How can we be One YWCA when we take on issues we are not all in agreement on?

In our latest survey of associations, 83% of those that responded identified “advocating to protect reproductive health services and to provide individuals with the full range of reproductive health care” as one of the most important health and safety priorities.

We agree on our support of women and girls, working to empower them and creating space for them to thrive.

Will this impact our fundraising and revenue?

We trust that our funders support us for our commitment to empowering women and girls. If ever they feel our programs and practices no longer reflect our mission or theirs, we understand they might step away. We hope that is not the case. The work we do to support women and girls, particularly women and girls of color, has a profound effect on their lives and the communities in which they live.

What do you expect of local associations? What do you want them to do or say?

We know that not every local will have the interest and bandwidth to join us in this work. We are hopeful that associations will choose to stand with us but understand that that's easier for some than others.

This is a deeply personal and highly sensitive issue. It is one in which friends and neighbors, even family members and colleagues, differ in their convictions or how publicly they wish to engage. Each association will determine how they will support this effort; we will provide the tools including talking points, FAQ's, a template press release, and template op-ed to help in this endeavor.