

Testimony of Lauren Miller
“*Crossing the Line: Abortion Bans and Interstate Travel for Care After Dobbs*”
Before the Subcommittee on Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action, and Federal Rights of
the Senate Judiciary
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My name is Lauren Miller and I live in Dallas, Texas. Thank you for inviting me here today to talk about how the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and Texas’s inhumane abortion bans affected me and my family. The legal changes in my home state stripped me of my bodily autonomy and kept me from making life and death decisions about my health, my children’s health, and the future of my family.

My pregnancy was not my own. It belonged to the state. And ultimately, the opinions of Texas politicians and government lawyers overrode the medical judgment of my physicians and trampled my constitutional rights to life and health. I was forced to travel out-of-state for the essential and life-preserving medical care that I needed: an abortion.

Already a mother of a toddler, I was several weeks into my second pregnancy when I wound up in the emergency room following 36 hours of unrelenting vomiting. I needed treatment for severe dehydration and, to be safe, they took a look at the baby.

There is nothing that can prepare you for the shock, terror, and *excitement* of finding out that you’re pregnant with twins.

My husband and I embraced this family expansion, making plans and purchases for our future—a bigger car, a supersized stroller to hold three children, that must-have twin nursing pillow.

But those plans were shattered several weeks later. Still struggling with unforgiving nausea and vomiting, we learned at the 12-week ultrasound that one of the twins was unlikely to survive. There were numerous concerns about his development, including the devastating diagnosis that half of his brain was filled with fluid.

We went through more testing. More ultrasounds. And the news kept getting worse.

In speaking with our team of doctors, nurses, and genetic counselors, we kept arriving at the same awful conclusion: *one of our twin sons was going to die*. It was just a matter of how soon. And *every day* that he continued to grow in utero, he would be putting his twin and me at greater and greater health risk.

The answer should have been simple: I needed an abortion of one twin to save the other and to save myself. And just a few years ago, before *Roe* fell, I would have been able to get that procedure in my home community.

But because of Texas's new abortion laws, *every single* medical professional we spoke with told us that the medical care I needed was illegal in Texas. They were terrified to even suggest an abortion for the twin that could never survive.

The most helpful and direct information we received was from one doctor, who, clearly frustrated after one of our most devastating ultrasounds, ripped off his gloves, threw them in the trash and bluntly told us, "This baby isn't going to make it to birth. I can't help you. You need to leave the state."

Days later, I ended up in the emergency room again—vomiting so severely that I feared the placenta would detach and I would bleed out. I was dehydrated and shaking uncontrollably as the team in the emergency room worked to stabilize me. I was at risk of organ damage to my kidneys and brain—but I still wasn't close enough to death to receive abortion care in Texas.

An abortion was the best chance we had of saving our other son and preserving my life and health. Yet there were no options or next steps. We had reached the point where healthcare ends in Texas. I was going to have to flee the state where my family has lived for eight generations.

I was terrified.

Now we had to scramble to find trustworthy information and navigate the logistics of traveling out of state for an abortion.

The bounty laws in Texas scared us and we feared who could turn against us. Was it safer to attempt 12 hours in a car through rural Texas while I was violently sick? What if I got worse? We knew flying was faster, but what if I was pulled out of the security line and questioned—or not allowed on the flight because I was too sick?

Should we leave our cell phones at home and rely on cash only to prevent being tracked?

I was so lucky to be able to leave the state; we have met many others in similar situations who have not been able to pick up and leave Texas in the midst of a medical emergency. And they shouldn't have had to.

Two weeks ago, the Texas Supreme Court issued a ruling in *Zurawski v. Texas*, a lawsuit brought by twenty women denied necessary abortion care in Texas despite facing dangerous pregnancy complications—including me. The highest court in Texas refused to provide clarity on exceptions to the state's abortion bans, saying only that abortions are not permitted in situations where the fetus has a lethal condition and will not survive, unless the pregnant person is also facing an imminent life-threatening condition.

Where does that leave Texans like me? I was stripped of my bodily autonomy. My life was in danger—so was the life of my now-healthy, happy one-year old son. It was a year

and a half ago and I still sometimes wake up in a cold sweat, terrified by nightmares of being hunted down.

Exceptions to abortion bans are fiction. They don't exist in Texas. I am living proof of that.

We need federal protection for abortion care right *now*. We need federal protection to preserve the doctor-patient relationship right *now*. We need federal protection for anyone who wants to seek travel for medical care right *now*.

Being pregnant is no reason to have our human rights to health, life and liberty trampled upon. This subjugation and dehumanization of women needs to stop—not get worse.

Thank you for having me here today.