



HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

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Statement on the Right to Reproductive Freedom

We deeply lament the recent decision by the United States Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, curtailing the ability of individuals especially women to make reproductive healthcare decisions for themselves.

The issue of abortion should not be seen in dualistic absolutes. The Dharma teaches us to value the preciousness of all life or existence regardless of the form. However, we also know there are various causes and conditions, some beyond the immediate control of any one individual, which factor into the personal and private decision to end a pregnancy. Thus, we should refrain from unfairly judging the decisions made by another. As such, we believe the agency of an individual should be respected and honored, as we each have the capacity to make informed and responsible decisions for ourselves based on circumstances.

Shinran Shōnin, the founder of Shin Buddhism affirmed the complexities of life and how difficult it is for us to discern the wholesome from the unwholesome. This is why we go to the Dharma (Teachings) for guidance and are unconditionally embraced by the non-discriminative Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha which surrounds one and all beyond the distinctions that our human minds may make.

The Court's decision to eliminate federal protections for abortion will deepen inequality in our country, as many individuals and communities already face inconsistent access to quality health care services. Especially at risk are Black, Latino, Indigenous, and other communities of color who will encounter worsening health and economic disparities. Women's reproductive health services should be considered basic health care.

We acknowledge the pain, fear, and hurt that so many in our country are experiencing. We will continue to support the spiritual and bodily autonomy of women and others to make informed decisions about their own reproductive health.

Guided by the Buddha's Teachings, we believe complex and difficult decisions should be made with compassion, empathy, responsibility, humility, and an understanding of an individual's sometimes extraordinary circumstances.

May we live with a vision of mutuality and act from an understanding of our profound interconnectedness with kindness and respect for all.

In Gassho,
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Rev. Blayne Higa, Chair
HHMH Committee on Social Concerns