

The pro-life movement is rising to the moment

“Fear not.” Even the bravest and best of us needs to hear that age-old message sometimes, whether it’s a woman unexpectedly pregnant, a new father grappling with big responsibilities, or the common people of a nation facing a pivotal decision. Right now, those are my words of encouragement to our pro-life Republican friends, who may have dreamed but not expected that the end of abortion could come so soon.

The Dobbs case is our greatest hope in generations of righting an egregious injustice. Life has been winning for some time, with state legislatures and governors leading the charge in enacting more than 100 new pro-life laws this year. The Texas Heartbeat Act remains in effect, for now, saving lives daily. Victory means unshackling states and Congress to have the truly democratic debate the Supreme Court denied them, and new opportunities to pass ambitious laws that save countless lives.

Let’s remember how we got this far. After the early shock of Roe v. Wade, the pro-life movement learned to go on offense – exposing pro-abortion extremism and refusing to cede the narrative. By winning elections, we’ve proven that pro-life is both morally right and politically smart. Modern science and compassion are on our side, and the overwhelming majority of Americans support commonsense pro-life policies championed by today’s GOP.

The issue isn’t going away. With nothing else to run on, pro-abortion Democrats will use it to fire up a despondent base. Silence, pivots or

obfuscation won't help Republicans win these battles – but if they are well prepared, the Democrat strategy will backfire.

A recent Politico article began: “The quick-setting gospel in Washington, D.C. last week was that any rollback of Roe v. Wade next year would trigger a Democratic revolt, placing abortion rights at the center of the midterm elections and sparking unprecedented turnout on the left. But in the days since the Supreme Court’s oral arguments on a case from Mississippi, a more sober and nuanced assessment has begun to settle in...”

In the Virginia elections, 8% of voters named abortion as their top issue, and those voters backed pro-life Republican Glenn Youngkin 17 points. Not only did his opponent fail to scare women into voting Democrat, 51% of women who cared most about the life issue cast votes for Youngkin. Abortion is arguably the essential “kitchen table issue,” leaving about 63 million seats at America’s tables empty – but even with a host of different issues meriting attention, it was more than enough to deliver the margin of victory.

There’s more bad news for pro-abortion Democrats. Three separate polls in the last week found only tepid support for Roe. One found that 63% of Americans want to overturn it or change the status quo. Another confirmed that the majority would welcome a 15-week abortion limit like Mississippi’s, which reflects scientific evidence that unborn babies feel pain well before viability.

Education remains crucial. According to Politico, 44% of respondents reported hearing “not much” or “nothing at all” about the case. They must hear a steady drumbeat from Republican leaders and all quarters of the movement over the next year. Roe is abstract to many Americans; polls don’t usually explain that it imposed abortion on demand through the moment of birth nationwide. When

they learn our radical policies put us in the company of North Korea and China, they are horrified. When they learn the Democratic Party agenda entails painful late-term abortions up to birth, even infanticide, they are motivated to turn out or change their vote.

People also rightly want assurance from leaders that women and children won't be abandoned. The pro-life movement has put its treasure where our mouths are, spending 50 years building the social safety net for a post-Roe world. Our angels on the front lines are the workers of America's 2,700 pregnancy centers, who provide vital services to millions each year, often without a dime in public funding. This care extends to mother and child well beyond birth. (Planned Parenthood doesn't do that. They offer one solution – abortion – to 96% of pregnant clients.) We aren't finished. Elected leaders wanting to step up and make a big impact ought to give Texas' \$100-million-a-year Alternatives to Abortion program a look.

"The time is always right to do what is right," as Martin Luther King, Jr. said. Life is the human rights issue of our day, and what is right is to give it the strongest defense possible at this critical time. Through political debate, we have the chance to shape the culture, build consensus, and save lives. The pro-life movement has the backs of pro-life leaders; we only cannot speak in place of them. Each of us must rise to the moment, and I'm confident we will – beginning by listening to that voice urging us to have no fear.

• *Marjorie Dannenfelser is president of the pro-life group Susan B. Anthony List.*
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