

# [***'It's really terrifying': Woman denied abortion in Texas reflects on politicians and judges playing role in women's medical decisions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGW-0SM1-JBSS-S1G9-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Kate Cox, the [*Texas woman who had to leave her state*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/11/us/kate-cox-abortion-law-texas-case/index.html) to seek an abortion, hadn't paid much attention to ***politics*** before she had to end a life-threatening pregnancy.

Now, after a legal battle that garnered national attention, she's outspoken about the toll that politicizing such health decisions takes on women and families and is expected to attend the president's Thursday State of the Union address as a guest of [*first lady Jill Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/02/politics/jill-biden-2024-campaign/index.html).

"Pregnancies are complicated and it's difficult sometimes to build your family so it's really terrifying when that's left up to politicians and judges," Cox told CNN's Dana Bash in a sit-down interview ahead of the address.

The Texas Supreme Court's decision to block Cox from receiving an abortion after her fetus had been diagnosed with a rare and deadly genetic condition called trisomy 18 was "crushing," she told Bash.

Cox, who was 20 weeks pregnant at the time, [*sued the state of Texas*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/05/us/texas-woman-high-risk-pregnancy-abortion-lawsuit/index.html), arguing that carrying her pregnancy to term would be life-threatening and asking a court to declare that she had the right to terminate it. While Texas law bans abortions after approximately six weeks of pregnancy, it makes limited exceptions, including to save the life of the mother.

The [*state Supreme Court swiftly reversed*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/11/us/texas-woman-leaves-state-abortion/index.html) a lower-court ruling, saying Cox's doctor did not establish her symptoms were life-threatening - prompting her to travel to New Mexico to undergo an abortion. Having to seek the procedure out of state, she said, "added a lot of pain and suffering to what was already the most devastating time of our lives."

"I'm just one," Cox told Bash. "There's a lot of women and families that are suffering because of the laws in Texas today."

Cox's experience underscores just how contentious the reproductive rights landscape has grown in the wake of Roe v. Wade's reversal in 2022, as the abortion issue that had percolated in the political debate for decades became a major flashpoint.

More than a dozen states have [*banned the procedure*](https://www.cnn.com/us/abortion-access-restrictions-bans-us-dg/index.html), while Republican-led state legislatures elsewhere have pushed for restrictions. Reproductive rights advocates have also expressed concern in recent weeks that in vitro fertilization, a common treatment for couples struggling with fertility issues, could also face restrictions after the [*Alabama Supreme Court ruled*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/03/us/alabama-ivf-ruling-rehearing-application/index.html) that frozen embryos are children - a move that Cox described as "hurting families."

Cox and her husband, Justin, told Bash that they are sharing their story so "people have the opportunity to see" that families are being hurt by such laws. But being in the spotlight - especially as one of the faces of the post-Roe abortion landscape - is unusual for the couple.

The couple is in Washington, Justin Cox said, to "bring awareness" and "change the minds of people" who don't pay attention to the issue because they don't think it directly impacts them.

"Unless you think something is going to impact you, you're probably not going to pay much attention to it. But it can and so we're just trying to bring as much awareness to this as we can," he said.

Asked whether they would be voting for President Joe Biden in his rematch with presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump come November, the couple said they intended to support access to abortion when they cast their votes.

"The number one thing we're both voting for is protection of abortion rights because women and families deserve medical care," Kate Cox said. "I don't want to see others continue to be hurt."

Democrats have made reproductive rights a [*campaign centerpiece*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/biden-campaign-abortion-rights-donald-trump/index.html), hoping the issue motivates voters as they look to keep the presidency and win control of both chambers in Congress. Meanwhile, Trump - the remaining GOP presidential candidate - has [*privately expressed*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/17/politics/biden-democrats-attack-trump-abortion-report/index.html) that he supports a 16-week federal abortion ban.

Calling it an "incredible honor" to be invited to the State of the Union address, Cox said that she's grateful to the first couple "for shining a light on this important issue."

She recalled the moment she missed a call from the White House because "in true mom fashion actually I was chasing kids."

"When I looked, I saw that caller ID said I had missed a call, and caller ID showed 'Joseph Biden' so I didn't think it was real," Cox told Bash, adding that she immediately started receiving texts that the president was trying to reach her. When she did speak with Biden, "he said some really kind words," she shared.

"I'm really grateful," Cox said.

CNN's Zoe Sottile, Ashley Killough and Ed Lavandera contributed to this report.

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