

# [***Harris pins the blame on Trump for Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5C-H181-JBSS-S002-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Waukesha, Wisconsin (CNN) &#8212; Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday pinned blame squarely on Donald Trump for the reversal of Roe v. Wade, saying the former president is "proud that women are silently suffering" without a guaranteed right to abortion.

"The previous president expressed his intentions quite clearly. And fast forward to just recently, says he's proud of what he did," Harris told CNN's Laura Coates during an exclusive interview in Wisconsin, where the vice president was launching a national tour in support of reproductive rights.

She said the likely Republican nominee relishes his role in new, restrictive abortion laws that have emerged in the aftermath of the high court ruling.

"By inference, he is proud that women have been deprived of fundamental freedoms to make decisions about their own body; by inference, proud that doctors are being penalized and criminalized for providing health care, proud that women are silently suffering because they don't have access to the health care they need," Harris added. "So, let's understand that the stakes are so very high."

It was a preview of a central reelection argument in a rematch between Trump and President Joe Biden, a contest that will be shadowed by the former president's multiple courtroom trials, including one related to Trump's role in events that led to the January 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol.

The vice president rejected outright Trump's assertions that his legal issues amount to political persecution undertaken by the Biden administration: "What he's saying is not factual, period," she said. "And that would not be new for him, would it?"

And Harris said it was imperative Americans remain watchful for signs of democratic erosion in the lead-up to this year's contest.

"I think everyone is right to be vigilant in demanding that we maintain our democracy. And we uphold its pillars, which includes the integrity of a free and fair election system," Harris said in the CNN interview, listing intimidation of poll workers as an example of what to watch out for in the coming months as the election gets underway.

"It is important that we all remember that a hallmark of a democracy is civic participation. Which means let's all vote - I'm not telling you who to vote for, but please, in the midst of all that you've got going on, take the time to fill out a ballot if you can vote by mail and send it in," she said.

Harris spoke a day ahead of the New Hampshire primary, where Trump maintains a sizable lead against his remaining GOP rival, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley.

As part of her campaign pitch, Haley has made Harris a frequent target, claiming that because of his age, a vote for Biden would amount to a vote for Harris - and suggesting the vice president wasn't up for the job. Harris said that type of criticism wasn't unique for powerful women.

"I think that most women who have risen in their profession, who are leaders in their profession, have had similar experiences," she told Coates. "I was the first woman to be elected district attorney. I was the first woman to be elected attorney general in the state of California, and I'm the first woman to be vice president. And I love my job."

As she and Biden gear up for what could be the imminent start of the general election, Harris worked to underscore the stakes of the upcoming contest - stakes many Democrats worry haven't registered yet with enough voters.

She said those who committed acts of violence on January 6, 2021, "need to be taken into account and held accountable for those acts."

And Harris accused Republicans of "playing ***politics***" with immigration, as she and Biden come under criticism for not doing more to stem the flow of migrants coming across the southern border.

Still, for Democrats, no issue better illustrates the choice in November than abortion, which the party has seized upon in the wake of the court's 2022 decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Trump's role in gutting abortion rights - his three conservative Supreme Court picks all voted to overturn Roe v. Wade - is emerging as a core theme for [*Harris and Biden as they seek reelection*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/biden-campaign-abortion-rights-donald-trump/index.html). Reproductive rights have galvanized Democrats and proven a winner at the ballot box in the 19 months since the high court overturned the ruling.

Harris plans to travel to several other states to speak about the issue on her national "Fight for Reproductive Freedoms Tour," which is expected to last through March. And she will appear at a [*joint rally with Biden on Tuesday*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/18/politics/biden-harris-reproductive-rights-2024/index.html) - the same day as the New Hampshire primary - to draw more attention to abortion rights.

"I am going to do exactly what I'm doing here in Wisconsin, which is traveling in the country to remind people of not only what is at stake and the harm that is occurring every day, so many women silently suffering, but also remind them of the connection between their vote and an outcome that puts back in place the protections of Roe. So these months are going to matter," Harris said Monday.

On Sunday, the Biden campaign unveiled a new television ad that features an emotional direct-to-camera testimonial from Dr. Austin Dennard, a Texas OB-GYN and mother who traveled out of her state, which has a strict abortion ban, to terminate her pregnancy after learning her fetus had a fatal condition. The campaign said the spot would run during this week's season premiere of ABC's "The Bachelor" as it targets young female voters.

At the White House on Monday, Biden met with his administration's task force on reproductive rights, criticizing Republicans for trying to ban abortion and announcing new steps the White House is taking to expand access to contraception and other reproductive care.

Still, Biden and Harris have acknowledged that fully restoring the protections included in Roe will be impossible without congressional action.

"President Joe Biden has been very clear, when Congress puts the protections of Roe back into the law, he will sign it," Harris told Coates in Wisconsin. "Similarly, President Joe Biden has been very clear if these extremists achieve their other goal, which is to have a national ban, which means state by state by state. Joe Biden will veto that."

"The stakes are high," she said.

This story has been updated with additional reporting.

By Kevin Liptak, CNN

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