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## **U.S. Supreme Court Upholds Federal Abortion Ban**

### *Law Threatens Women's Health; Criminalizes Safe, Early Abortions*

WASHINGTON, DC — The U.S. Supreme Court today upheld the federal abortion ban in the cases *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood* and *Gonzales v. Carhart*. The ban, passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in 2003, criminalizes abortions in the second trimester of pregnancy that doctors say are safe and the best to protect women's health. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) denounced today's ruling.

"This ruling flies in the face of 30 years of Supreme Court precedent and the best interest of women's health and safety," said PPFA Deputy Director of Litigation and Law Eve Gartner, who argued *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood*. "Today the court took away an important option for doctors who seek to provide the best and safest care to their patients. This ruling tells women that politicians, not doctors, will make their health care decisions for them."

"Today's decision is a shocking setback for women's health," added Gartner. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said in her dissent, '...the Court deprives women of the right to make an autonomous choice, even at the expense of their safety.'

When President Bush signed the federal abortion ban in 2003, PPFA, Planned Parenthood Golden Gate (PPGG), the Center for Reproductive Rights, the National Abortion Federation and the American Civil Liberties Union challenged it in federal district courts around the country. Leading ob/gyns at major medical institutions testified against the ban because it would prevent them from providing the care that is best to protect their patients' health. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Nurses Association and many other medical groups oppose the federal ban. Until now, every court that examined the ban struck it down because, among other things, it fails to protect women's health.

"This ban was driven by anti-choice politics, and unfortunately, the ruling does not respect women's health," said PPGG President Dian Harrison. "While the Bush administration has been appointing justices to the Supreme Court who threaten women's health, Planned Parenthood has been focused on our top priorities: the health and safety of our patients. We will work to ensure women are provided with the best and safest possible care under this law."

Just seven years ago, the Supreme Court had struck down a very similar abortion ban enacted in Nebraska because it did not have a health exception, with Justice O'Connor providing the critical vote that upheld protections for women's health and safety. Since then, Justice O'Connor retired and was replaced on the court by Justice Alito.

"The new Bush court turned its back on women's health and safety with this ruling," said PPFA President Cecile Richards. "It's 2007. Americans need Supreme Court justices who recognize the importance of women's health."

For more information, visit [www.federalabortionban.org](http://www.federalabortionban.org).

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Planned Parenthood Federation of America is the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care advocate and provider. We believe that everyone has the right to choose when or whether to have a child, and that every child should be wanted and loved. Planned Parenthood affiliates operate more than 860 health centers nationwide, providing medical services and sexuality education for millions of women, men, and teenagers each year. We also work with allies worldwide to ensure that all women and men have the right and the means to meet their sexual and reproductive health care needs.