



Briefing Memo, May 2022

Abortion Bans and Minority Rule



WDN WOMEN
DONORS
NETWORK

The Reflective Democracy Campaign is
a project of the Women Donors Network


WhoLeads.Us


Abortion Bans and Democracy Don't Mix

Supreme Court Justice Alito asserts that the Court's leaked decision overruling *Roe v. Wade* returns the power to decide for or against abortion "to the people and their elected representatives." In fact, the decision delivers the power to white men.

In 21 states, overturning *Roe v. Wade* will activate existing abortion bans or "trigger laws" which ban abortion when *Roe* no longer applies. Republican state legislators hold majorities in all 21 states, whose diverse populations are barely — if at all — represented by the ruling party.

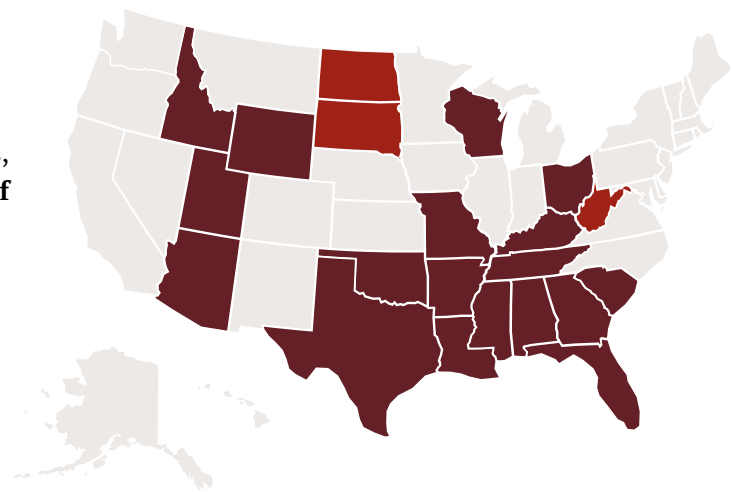
 In 15 of the 21 states, GOP state legislators are more than 80 percent white men, virtually erasing the voices of the women affected by abortion bans.

 While CDC data shows women of color are disproportionately impacted by abortion bans, women of color are less than 0.5 percent of GOP legislators in the 21 states. Fourteen of the 21 GOP caucuses include zero women of color.

 In all but three of the 21 states, new voter suppression laws (since 2020) are in effect or pending, separating "the people" even further from the power to decide.

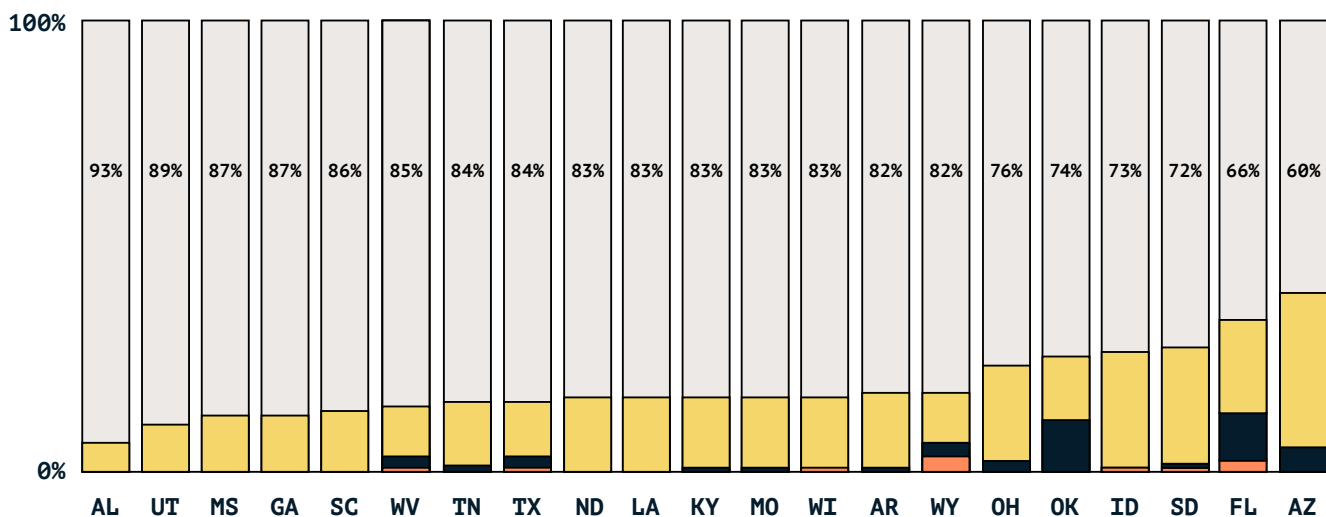
States Banning Abortion Access

 Ban  Ban With Voter Suppression Laws



GOP State Legislators in States Poised to Ban Abortion

 White Men  White Women  Men of Color  Women of Color



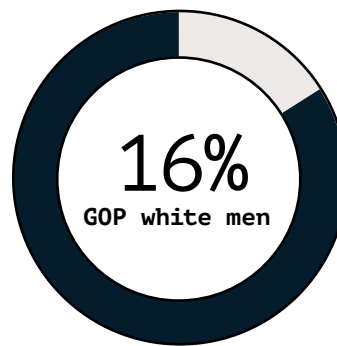
Letting States Decide Silences Women

Americans imagine that sending an issue back for states to decide means applying the democratic process so the majority can prevail.

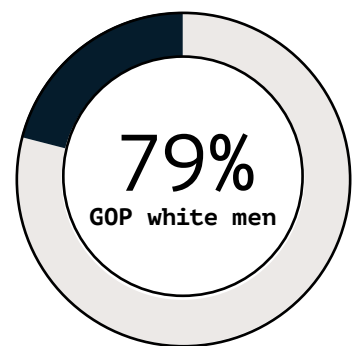
But the data show something different. In many states, “the majority” is actually a small minority, calling the shots for everyone.

Republican white men are about 16 percent of Americans, but when it comes to abortion bans, they’re making decisions for millions. Insulated from accountability by their radical homogeneity, Republican state legislators run a demographic dictatorship, where one tiny slice of the population has sole authority over life-altering decisions impacting all.

US Population



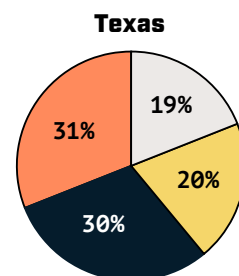
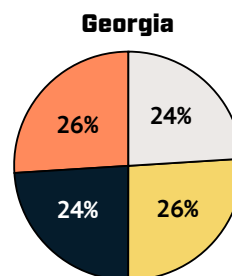
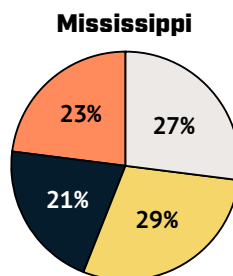
GOP State Legislators



Minority Rule At A Glance

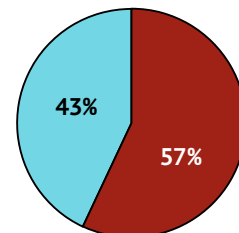
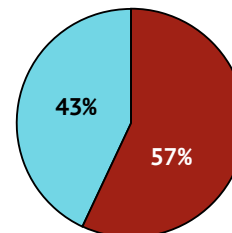
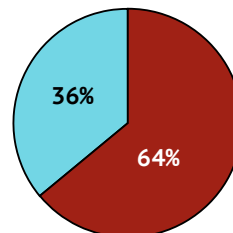
□ White Men □ White Women ■ Men of Color ■ Women of Color

Population

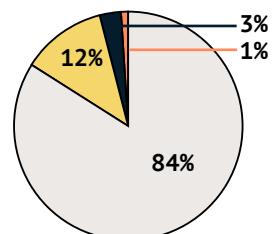
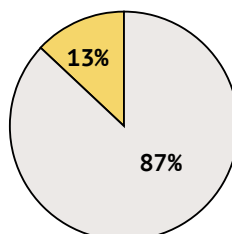
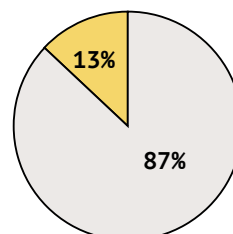


State Legislature Majority

■ Republicans ■ Democrats




GOP State Legislators





Who Will Prosecute Women and Doctors?

Brittney Poolaw, a 20-year-old Native American woman, is serving a four year sentence because after she sought medical care for a miscarriage, an Oklahoma prosecutor charged her with manslaughter for the loss of her pregnancy.

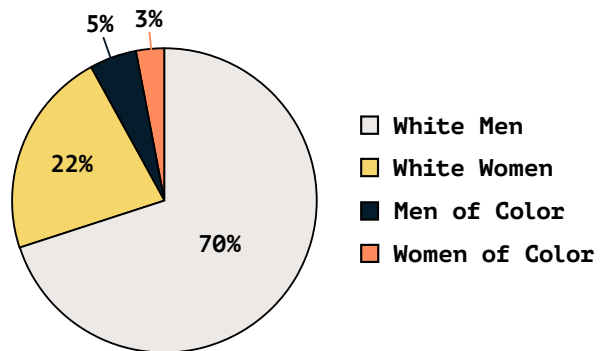
Such prosecutions – mainly involving low income women and women of color – are already on the rise. Where abortions are banned, criminal charges against women and their doctors are likely to soar.

 In the 21 states that will ban abortions if *Roe* is overturned, elected prosecutors are overwhelmingly white and male.

 Across the 21 states, elected prosecutors are 92% white and 75% male. Only 3% of them are women of color.

 In six of the 21 states, every elected prosecutor is white.

Elected Prosecutors By the Numbers



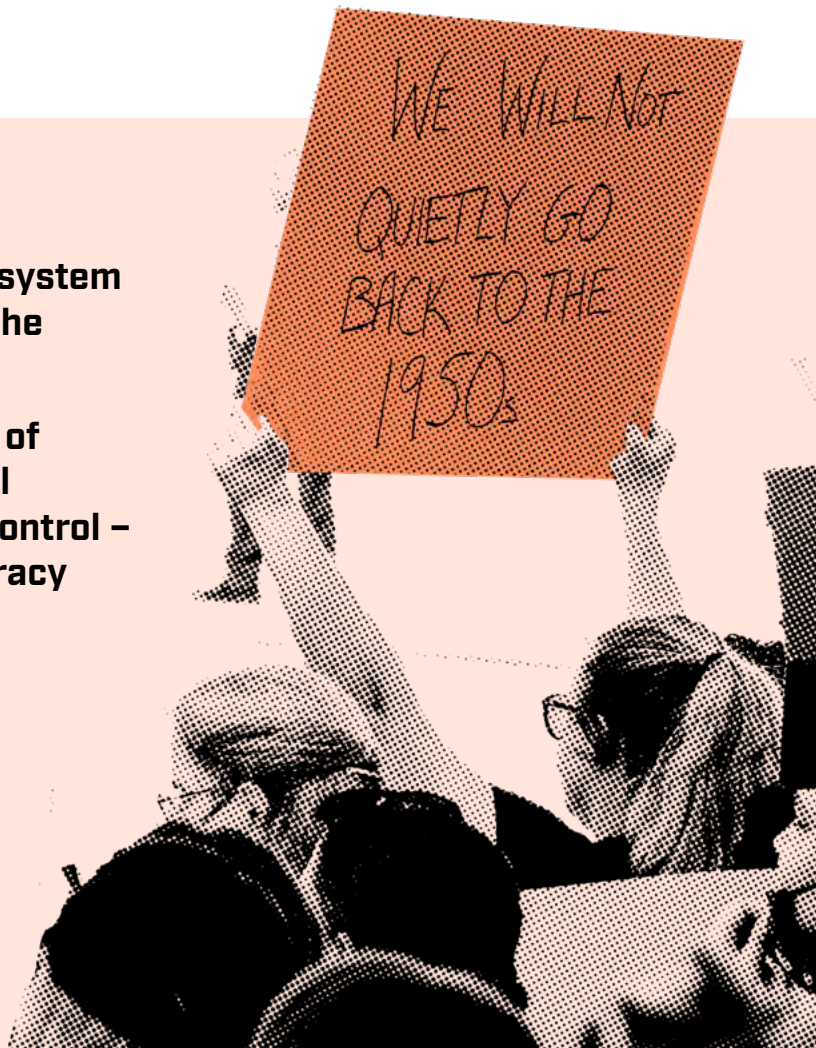
When the elected officials criminalizing health care are mostly white men, and their primary targets are poor women and women of color, just outcomes are unlikely to follow.

“ There’s nothing democratic about a system in which a small minority overrides the self-determination of the majority.

This particular minority is incapable of pregnancy – the profoundly personal experience they are determined to control – which makes the violation of democracy even more egregious.

Brenda Choresi Carter

*Director
Reflective Democracy Campaign*



About the Reflective Democracy Campaign

The [Reflective Democracy Campaign](#) reports on, funds, and organizes the movement for a democracy whose leaders fully reflect the diversity of the American people. We are the only resource for comprehensive data and analysis on the race and gender of elected officials and candidates at the federal, state, county, and city levels. Our data sets, reports, and other resources are freely available at [WhoLeadsUs](#).

Our recent research includes:

- **System Failure: What the 2020 Primary Elections reveal about our democracy:** While primaries are viewed as robustly competitive, [we found a pattern of systemic gridlock fortifying white male minority rule](#).
- **Black Representation in Turbulent Times:** Even as white nationalism exploded during the Trump era, [Black leaders made historic gains](#) at the ballot box.

Contact the Campaign for more data and analysis on the demographics of political power. Data on specific ethnicities, levels of office, and/or geographies is available, as well as analysis about election gains by women and people of color, and on the persistent white male overrepresentation distorting our democracy.

For more information, please write to hello@wholeads.us and follow us on Twitter [@WhoLeadsUs](#).

Research Credits

We are grateful to these intrepid organizations for their research:

- [Brennan Center for Justice](#) on voter suppression laws
- [Guttmacher Institute](#) on abortion bans
- [Mother Jones](#) on criminalized miscarriages

Photo Credits

Cover: Illustration reference images from Unsplash: Michael Alfonso, Mikelya Fournier, Mateus Campos Felipe, Christopher Campbell, Meital Anlen, Taylor Deas-Melesh Izzy Park, Ann Agterberg, Leighann Blackwood, Raul Varzar, Mitchell Diboll, ziphaus, Ety Fidele, Dominic Blignaut, Mathilda Khoo, Cassidy Dickens, Brian Lawson, Jota Lao, Aiony Haust, AllGo, Hermes Rivera, Ety Fidele, Jade Destiny

Page 3: Photo by Colin Lloyd on Unsplash

Page 4: Photo by Gayatri Malhotra on Unsplash