

## **ROE v. WADE**

Decided: January 22, 1973  
Reargued: October 11, 1972  
Argued: December 13, 1971

Subjects: Privacy: Abortion, Including Contraceptives

### Facts of the Case

Roe, a Texas resident, sought to terminate her pregnancy by abortion. Texas law prohibited abortions except to save the pregnant woman's life. After granting certiorari, the Court heard arguments twice. The first time, Roe's attorney -- Sarah Weddington -- could not locate the constitutional hook of her argument for Justice Potter Stewart. Her opponent -- Jay Floyd -- misfired from the start. Weddington sharpened her constitutional argument in the second round. Her new opponent -- Robert Flowers -- came under strong questioning from Justices Potter Stewart and Thurgood Marshall.

### Question Presented

Does the Constitution embrace a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy by abortion?

### Conclusion

The Court held that a woman's right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy (recognized in *Griswold v. Connecticut*) protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision gave a woman total autonomy over the pregnancy during the first trimester and defined different levels of state interest for the second and third trimesters. As a result, the laws of 46 states were affected by the Court's ruling.