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National Weekend of Prayer in Support of Abortion Access Draws More Than 80 Religious Congregations

10,000 People Across Multiple Faiths to Participate in Prayer Days before Supreme Court Reviews Texas Clinic Shutdown Law

WASHINGTON, DC – Just days before the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the most significant abortion case in decades, more than 80 religious congregations, representing more than 10,000 people of faith, will participate in a National Weekend of Prayer. This weekend, congregations across the country will take time during services to pray that the Supreme Court reaffirms a woman's right to access safe, legal abortion care. Congregations participating in the National Weekend of Prayer represent 19 faith traditions, including Catholic, Episcopal, Muslim, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Unitarian Universalist communities.

On March 2nd, the U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in the case *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, which challenges a Texas law that could shutter more than 75 percent of abortion clinics in the state. Earlier this year, nearly 1,300 faith leaders from across the country signed on to a "[friend of the court](#)" brief filed with the Supreme Court arguing that "many religious traditions recognize and support the moral right of each woman to make her own decisions about her pregnancy in accordance with her faith and conscience."

"As people of faith, we believe women are moral agents who have the right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. The decision to have an abortion is a moral decision and all people must have the economic, social and political power to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families." said the **Rev. Dr. Debra W. Haffner, president of the Religious Institute**, the lead organizer of the National Weekend of Prayer. "We are pleased to join with thousands of people of faith this weekend to pray that the Supreme Court strikes down laws denying poor women, women of color, and women in rural communities the same access to safe, accessible medical services that more privileged women have."

The **Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ**, who signed the faith brief said this morning: "As the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ: I want to signal my strong support for the rights of women to have fully funded and readily accessible health care options for all matters relating to their reproductive health. I am profoundly disappointed in what appears to be a concerted effort to remove choice and access from women, leaving them with fewer and fewer options. I call upon people of faith, of good will, and of conscience to remain vigilant against all efforts to dismantle women's health options."

The National Weekend of Prayer is co-sponsored by Just Texas: Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice, Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA), MCC Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Churches, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), National LGBTQ Task Force, Unitarian Universalist Association, Unitarian Universalist Women and Religion, and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

Nancy Kaufman, President of the National Council of Jewish Women, a cosponsor of the National Weekend of Prayer, said: "As Jews, we believe in the right of every person to basic dignity and in protecting every person's ability to make personal decisions about their health, according to their own religious beliefs. The deceptive laws challenged in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* run counter to our values because they erode a woman's ability to make her own faith-informed decisions about abortion and jeopardize access to safe care. NCJW's thousands of members nationwide, including in Texas, stand against these harmful restrictions and we urge the court to protect abortion access."

Reflecting on the role of people of faith in the upcoming case, **Chett Pritchett, Executive Director of the Methodist Federation for Social Action**, said "It is important for people of faith to have the opportunity to pray and reflect upon the call of justice in the public sphere. This collective weekend of prayer, across faith traditions, provides that opportunity, especially as the Supreme Court prepares to hear legal arguments around access to reproductive health care."

People of faith across the country will observe the Weekend of Prayer in their local churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples. **Sonja Miller, coordinator of Just Texas: Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice**, the organization leading faith-based action in Texas said, "The U. S. Supreme Court is preparing to consider the most important abortion case in nearly 25 years — and it originated right here in Texas. Faithful people of Texas support the right to access safe abortions. We will join together this weekend and pray for justice for the women and families of Texas who have already suffered because of the restrictions to safe abortions in Texas."

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The Religious Institute (www.religiousinstitute.org), based in Westport, CT, is a nonprofit, multifaith organization dedicated to advocating for sexual health, education and justice in faith communities and society. More than 8,500 clergy, seminary presidents and deans, religious scholars and other religious leaders representing more than 50 faith traditions are part of the Religious Institute's national religious leaders network.