

AS PREPARED REMARKS
SUPREME COURT DECISION TO OVERTURN ROE V. WADE
OHIO GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
OHIO STATEHOUSE
COLUMBUS, OH
JUNE 24

Good evening. As you know, earlier today the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. Now, the matter of abortion law and policy has been returned to the people of each state.

My purpose tonight is not to debate the merits of this decision. There will be plenty of time to do this in the days and weeks ahead.

I have two reasons for talking to you tonight.

First -- I think it is important that as we discuss the abortion issue, we do it in a civil way and recognize that there are people of goodwill on both sides, who have strongly and honestly held beliefs.

Second, I want to talk about the work that needs to be done to better support children and families and the common ground that we, as Ohioans, share.

My fellow Ohioans -- I fully understand that the Supreme Court's decision today is deeply troubling to many of you. Those of you who are pro-choice believe this is a matter of freedom and is a decision only the woman can make. Those who are pro-life, including my wife Fran and me, believe that the life of a human being is at stake and that we have an obligation to protect that innocent life.

We all have friends and others close to us whom we respect and who are on both sides of the issue.

But -- whether you are pro-life or pro-choice, Republican or Democrat -- we all need to be kind, civil, and respect one another as we debate this issue.

As the issue of abortion returns to the states, how we debate it is so very important. It is going to be very easy to let this debate get rough and tough -- and there is certainly nothing wrong with spirited debate. However, we must do it in a way that recognizes that smart, sincere, dedicated, and caring people can have very, very different and equally heartfelt views.

The First Amendment right of Freedom of Speech -- and those who choose to exercise that right -- must be respected and must be protected.

At the same time, even though Ohioans may disagree with each other on the issue of abortion, I do believe that there is common ground and essential goals that Ohioans share when it comes to children and families.

I believe that all Ohioans want this state to be the most pro-family, pro-child state in the country, and we are making great progress in creating an environment here in Ohio where families and children can thrive and live up to their full potential.

Though we have made progress, we agree that we must do even more to lower our infant and maternal mortality -- especially among African American mothers and babies.

We agree that no mother or child should go hungry or not have adequate housing.

We agree that no child in this state should suffer the devastating effects of toxic lead-paint.

And, we agree that all Ohio children have access to mental health services.

Here in Ohio, we are doing more than ever before to make sure that our youngest, most vulnerable children get the best possible start in life. We have doubled our investment in Ohio's voluntary home visiting programs, where trained professionals meet regularly with new and expectant moms and dads to teach valuable parenting skills.

And, through our "Bold Beginning" initiative, Ohio is already investing more than \$1 billion dollars to provide prenatal care, parenting classes, mentoring, education, and nutrition assistance to pregnant mothers and their families.

But there is so much more to be done -- so much work that remains.

And so today, I ask you -- my fellow Ohioans -- to work together with me to focus on these issues and commit ourselves to the health and success of Ohio's families. As part of that commitment, I have directed our state health and human services agencies to bring me innovative, new ideas for ensuring that vulnerable mothers are immediately identified and receive the help they need.

In the weeks ahead, I will be working with the General Assembly and our local communities to improve the quality of pre-and post-natal care, to increase the frequency of maternal depression screenings, and to expand mental health resources for women who experience miscarriages.

We will be working on efforts to increase awareness about adoption to ensure that every child finds a permanent, loving home and family.

And, we will seek to expand healthcare coverage to more mothers and children, so that no child in Ohio goes without regular primary care doctor visits, preventative care, and childhood vaccinations.

My fellow Ohioans, I ask you tonight to pull together.

Let us have our debate about abortion.

Let us do it civilly.

Let us respect each other.

And, let us concede that the other side is sincere in their beliefs.

But, no matter which side we are on in this debate, let us remember that we are, in the words of former Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis, “one people with one family. We all live in the same house.”

Like any family, while we may disagree vehemently on some things, we can still find common ground in other things. And so, let us now find that common ground, roll up our sleeves, dig deep, and join together in solving the problems that we all agree must be solved.

Thank you.