

**Statement from Martese Chism**  
**RN Case Manager for Cook County Health and**  
**an elected member of the Board of National Nurses Organizing Committee**

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"My name is Martese Chism and I am an RN Case Manager for Cook County Health and an elected member of the Board of National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United. I'm submitting this statement because there is a war on women in this country and we have to unite and fightback against these horrific attacks on women's rights. As a proud union nurse I understand that reproductive care and abortion is essential healthcare and a constitutional right of every human being. Reproductive services have in the past century provided tens of millions of women far more choices and control in their lives, and helped encourage educational and professional opportunities for women. Without full autonomy of our bodies we will never be equal and never have full control of our destinies.

"The legal attacks coming from Texas, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina, and elsewhere have the potential to overturn *Roe vs Wade*. Such a ruling would endanger the lives of millions of women by denying them safe, legal access to reproductive services. We can never go back to unsafe, back alley abortions that took the lives of so many women for far too long. However, we already live in an unacceptable status quo. We have a broken system that does not provide healthcare to everyone in our nation. It is not good enough to simply protect *Roe vs Wade*, we have to demand Medicare for All which of course includes full reproductive healthcare for everyone regardless of their ability to pay. As registered nurses, we see the daily injustices caused by our for-profit healthcare system and the physical, psychological, and spiritual toll it exacts on our patients. Healthcare is a human right. Reproductive care is a human right and it should not only belong to those with means or those who live in a certain state. Illinois has taken steps to protect a women's right to choose, but we cannot abandon women elsewhere whose rights are currently under attack in novel and disturbing ways. Our lawmakers in Washington D.C. and in our state capitols need to counter these attacks and advance a new healthcare paradigm where reproductive healthcare is free and available to all those who need it.

"We also need to demand justice and accountability for those whose reproductive rights have been directly harmed by a cruel and inhumane immigration system. It was nurses who blew the whistle and called out doctors who were forcibly sterilizing detained women. As nurses we act as our patients' advocates and it is our duty to protect our patients from harm. In that role, we are demanding action to dismantle the racist, misogynistic, classist, and xenophobic systems that are not just denying our communities access to healthcare but are actually actively harming our communities and our patients. Thank you for your time and I ask again to not just protect *Roe vs Wade*. Let us expand it and make reproductive healthcare and services a right of everyone."