Talking Points: Pro-Life Setback in *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt* (June 27, 2016)

*Background:   
On June 27, the Supreme Court, in a 5-3 opinion penned by Justice Breyer, struck down a Texas law that had required abortion clinics to meet the safety standards of ambulatory surgical centers, and had required doctors performing abortions to have hospital admitting privileges. This law was enacted to protect women’s health.* [*Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*](http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/15pdf/15-274_p8k0.pdf)*, No. 15-274 (U.S.). Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Alito and Thomas dissented.*

*Press Releases*

* [Bishops’ Pro-Life Spokeswoman Laments High Court Decision Rejecting Abortion Clinic Safety Law](http://www.usccb.org/news/2016/16-079.cfm) (6/27/16)
* [USCCB, Texas Catholic Conference and Other Christian Groups File Amicus Brief to Support Regulations Protecting Women’s Health & Safety in Abortion Clinics](http://www.usccb.org/news/2016/16-013.cfm) (2/2/16)
* [Full Text of Amicus Brief](http://www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/amicus-briefs/upload/Whole-Woman-s-Health-v-Hellerstedt.pdf) (2/1/16)

*Talking Points on SCOTUS Decision*

* The majority opinion is one more tragic instance of “abortion distortion”  
  — the tendency of courts to stray from the rules usually used in deciding cases  
  when the underlying dispute involves abortion.
* This is a significant setback for both women’s health *and* the pro-life movement.
* The Court has rejected a common-sense law protecting women from abortion facilities that put profits above patient safety.
* The law simply required abortion facilities to meet   
  the same health and safety standards as other ambulatory surgical centers   
  -- standards like adequate staffing, soap dispensers, and basic sanitary conditions.

It required abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals,  
and that hallways be wide enough to allow emergency personnel through with stretchers, should a life-threatening emergency arise.

* “Abortion claims the lives of unborn children,   
  and too often endangers their mothers, as well.   
  This ruling contradicts the consensus among medical groups   
  that such measures protect women’s lives.”  
  – Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for pro-life communications
* The abortion facility’s name in this case (“Whole Woman’s Health”) is ironic.   
  The Court’s ruling has essentially reduced women’s health to little more than   
  access to abortion.

Since the Court struck down the Texas law,   
sub-standard clinic conditions may remain in place,   
with no real back-up plan for women whose abortions have serious complications.

* Abortion is not mainstream medicine   
  – indeed, it’s not medical care at all, as it neither heals nor cures.
* It’s time to make abortion unthinkable.

*About Dr. Kermit Gosnell (mentioned multiple times in WWH v. Hellerstedt)*

*Background:   
On May 13, 2013, West Philadelphia abortionist Dr. Kermit Gosnell was found guilty of over 200 crimes, including one count of involuntary manslaughter in the death of a woman following an abortion. Women’s lives were endangered in his ill-equipped, unsanitary facility dubbed a “house of horrors” by the district attorney, Seth Williams.*

* The grand jury concluded that   
  Gosnell’s gruesome abortion practices would not have occurred   
  had his Pennsylvania facility conformed to ambulatory surgical requirements   
  -- the same sort of requirements struck down by the Supreme Court   
  in *Whole Woman’s Health v Hellerstedt*.
* Who will protect women from unscrupulous abortionists now?

*General Talking Points on Abortion*

* When a woman seeks an abortion, she may very well be in a panic.   
  If a woman’s experiencing a difficult pregnancy,  
  the solution is to end the difficulty, not the pregnancy!
* If you know of someone struggling with a challenging pregnancy, assure her that help is available at:   
  (*provide local pregnancy help center/appropriate diocesan office/local pro-life doctor*).
* Abortion on demand is a huge disservice to women,  
  many of whom come to eventually regret their choice  
  – especially if they were rushed or pressured in some way.
* If you know someone struggling after involvement in abortion,   
  assure her/him that confidential help is available at:   
  (*provide info for local Project Rachel/appropriate post-abortion healing ministry*)
* Our pro-life work has encountered a legal setback.   
  But, sustained by prayer and the sacraments,   
  we will continue to fight for an end to abortion,   
  and the protection of women and children, alike.

*June 28, 2016*