Abstract

Since 1973, the Supreme Court has heard nearly 50 cases related to State abortion access statutes. In the meantime, the American abortion debate has continued to remain salient and controversial among the public, interest groups, politicians, and the courts. Although abundant scholarship provides insight on the public’s opinions about abortion, most studies focus on the causes and nature of abortion attitudes, including demographic indicators and social changes. Likewise, academics and the media alike often publish articles related to the legality and morality of abortion. In contrast to these approaches, this study examines the relationship between the Supreme Court’s decisions and the public’s opinions on abortion access issues since Roe v. Wade (1973). Furthermore, this study uniquely includes an analysis of this relationship following the recent reversal of Roe in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization (2022). Consequently, the findings: 1) reaffirm the need for national surveys to ask specific questions on abortion access issues frequently challenged within Supreme Court cases, and; 2) present Dobbs as an unprecedented outlier in regards to previous Supreme Court decisions on abortion access.