



REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Jason Knapp for Congress • Candidate, Virginia's 1st Congressional District

Where I Stand

Decisions about pregnancy belong to a woman and her doctor. Not a politician. Not the federal government.

I support restoring the protections of Roe in federal law, so a woman's rights don't depend on the state she lives in. That means protecting access to contraception. It means protecting access to IVF and fertility care. And it means protecting the doctors who provide that care.

Politicians are not qualified to make medical decisions. They never were. The government has no business in an exam room.

Whose Law Is It

Our laws rest on one foundation: the consent of the governed. Not scripture — anyone's scripture. The First Amendment's promise is not only that the government will not establish a religion; it is that no citizen's rights will rise or fall on someone else's article of faith. That protection is not a threat to religious Americans. It is the very thing that guarantees their freedom too.

And it matters because religious majorities change. The denomination that holds power today may be the one seeking protection tomorrow. A nation that writes one faith's doctrine into binding law has not honored that faith — it has put every other conscience at its mercy, and eventually that faith's own. Abortion bans built on a particular religious definition of when life begins are exactly this: an attempt to give one theological answer the force of law over everyone — including the millions of Americans, many of them devout, whose own traditions answer the question differently. I will not vote to make any of them live under a creed that is not their own.

There is also a truth about these bans that their authors rarely say out loud: a ban does not end abortion. It ends safe and legal abortion — and only for some. The wealthy have always been able to find a way: a private physician, a flight to another state, the time and the money to make either happen. They could before Roe, and they can now. Restrictions fall hardest on the woman with the least — less access to reliable contraception in the first place, fewer dollars when a pregnancy comes, no leave to travel, no cushion to absorb the cost. The same law lands on two women and means two entirely different things: an inconvenience for one, an impossibility for the other. That is the part the people who pass these laws rarely have to learn firsthand.

The Threat

Members of Congress have introduced legislation that would impose a national abortion ban. If a bill like that passes, it overrides Virginia's law. Every protection Virginia women have today disappears, replaced by whatever a future Congress and a future president decide.

That is not a hypothetical. Bills to define personhood at the moment of fertilization — which would ban abortion nationwide and put IVF and many forms of contraception at legal risk — have been introduced in every recent Congress. They have dozens of co-sponsors. One of them is Rob Wittman.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court took away the federal floor that Roe v. Wade established for almost fifty years. The result is what we have now: a patchwork. More than a dozen states ban abortion outright. Others restrict it so severely that care is nearly impossible to get. Doctors face criminal exposure for treating miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies. Women have crossed state lines for emergency care. Some have been turned away from emergency rooms because hospitals are afraid of being sued. Women have died.

Virginia still has access. But a Virginia woman who crosses a state line for work or school finds her rights change at the border. That isn't freedom. And it isn't safe.

What I Will Do in Congress

Restore the protections of Roe in federal law.

I will support and vote for the Women's Health Protection Act, which codifies the right to abortion access nationwide and overrides state bans.

Protect access to contraception.

I will support and vote for the Right to Contraception Act, guaranteeing the right to obtain and use birth control. This should not be controversial. It should not be at risk. It is.

Protect IVF and fertility care.

The Alabama Supreme Court's 2024 ruling treating frozen embryos as children put fertility care at legal risk across the country. That ruling rested on the same personhood-at-fertilization theory that Rob Wittman has cosponsored at the federal level. Couples trying to have children should not have their treatment shut down by court rulings or state legislatures. I will support federal protection for IVF and other fertility care.

Protect the doctors who provide care.

Doctors are being driven out of states with abortion bans. Hospitals are losing OB-GYNs. Women in those states are losing access to maternal care of all kinds — not just abortion. I will support federal protections for medical providers whose only crime is doing their jobs.

Protect the right to travel.

A woman should not face criminal investigation for crossing a state line to see a doctor. I will oppose any effort — state or federal — to criminalize interstate travel for medical care.

The Record in VA-01

Rob Wittman cosponsored the Life at Conception Act — legislation declaring that constitutional personhood begins at the moment of fertilization — in five separate Congresses between 2011 and 2022. In 2021, he signed on the day it was introduced. That bill, if it became law, would ban abortion nationwide and put IVF and several forms of contraception at legal risk — in Virginia and everywhere else.

For years, that was a safe vote. Roe still stood; the bill was a statement, not a threat. Then in 2022 the Supreme Court overturned Roe — and personhood legislation stopped being symbolic and became a live possibility. That is the exact moment his name came off it. He has not cosponsored it since. A decade of support while it could not take effect, and silence the moment it could. That is not a record of conviction. It is the record of a man who knew exactly what the bill would do — and was only willing to back it when he was sure it would not.

VA-01 also sits next to states with very different rules. North Carolina has tightened restrictions sharply. The federal Congress is the only body that can guarantee Virginia women keep what they have — and extend those protections to women in states that have lost them.

The Bottom Line

This is not a question of personal belief. People in this district hold different beliefs. Many are people of faith. Many have wrestled with this issue privately, in their own families. I respect that. What I do not accept is the idea that government should make those decisions for them.

Jen and I have two daughters. They have fewer rights today than the day they were born. Every woman in this district deserves the freedom to make her own decisions — with her own doctor, in her own time.

The politicians who pass these laws don't bear the consequences of them. Women do. Doctors do. Families do. That is exactly the kind of accountability gap I am running to close.

Every woman deserves the freedom to decide what happens to her own body. Every doctor deserves to practice medicine without fear of prosecution. Every family deserves to make these choices for themselves.

That is the freedom I will go to Congress to defend.