

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** NARAL Pro-Choice America Research Team

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## “New” Anti-Choice “Feminist” Branding Has Been Years in the Making

### Overview

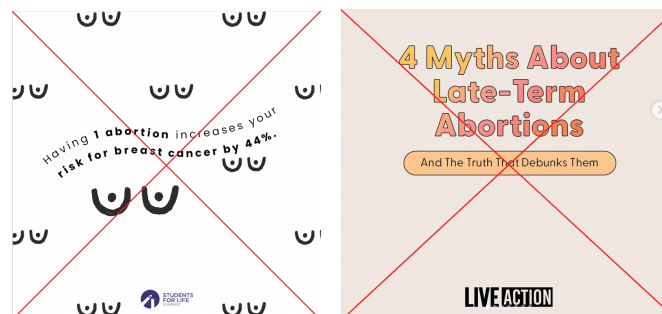
The 2022 March for Life theme, “Equality Begins in the Womb,” exemplifies the anti-choice movement’s longstanding strategy of [co-opting social justice rhetoric](#) in order to make its extreme agenda appear more palatable. Ahead of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, a case that directly challenges *Roe v. Wade*, anti-choice activists are leaning heavily into these false claims, particularly that their movement is “pro-woman.” This disingenuous representation of the movement glosses over the reality that its policies and rhetoric [actively harm transgender and queer women, women of color, and disabled women](#)—and restrict all women and pregnant people’s fundamental freedoms.

In this critical moment for the future of reproductive freedom, we must call out [the anti-choice movement’s fake “feminism”](#) for what it is: a tactic for maintaining white, patriarchal control.

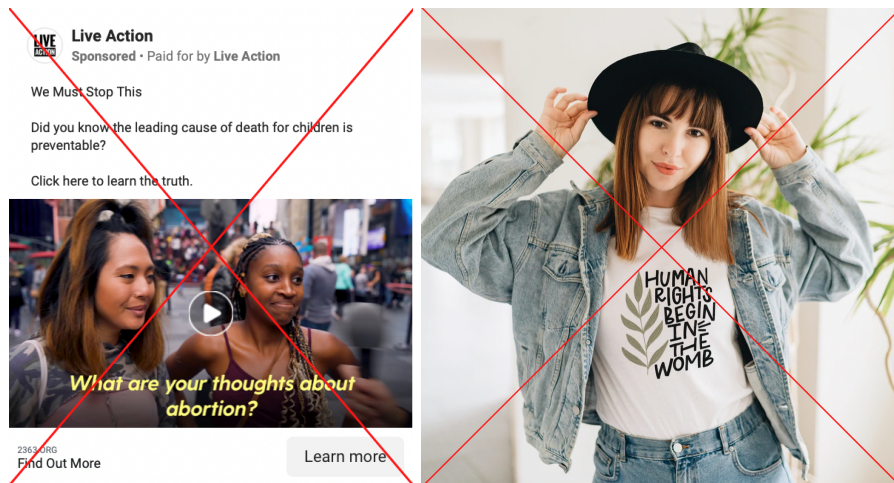
### Historical Context Behind “Pro-Woman” Tactics & Narratives

Anti-choice activists have worked to make women the face of their patriarchal movement. The white, male architects of the [Radical Right](#) who [strategically chose to politicize abortion](#) in an attempt to maintain their grasp on power took note of Phyllis Schlafly’s [effective campaign](#) to kill the Equal Rights Amendment, and she was eventually credited with [launching the anti-choice movement](#).

Appearing to be a movement “by women, for women” has been part of the anti-choice playbook ever since, as anti-choice groups consistently [spotlight](#) allied women lawmakers to justify attacks on abortion access. Their [digital advertising campaigns](#) increasingly feature images of young women of color and [imitate](#) graphic design styles typically used by progressive organizations. Anti-choice groups’ deceptive “feminist” rebranding is a transparent attempt to disguise their oppressive, [misogynistic values](#) and portray their [unpopular agenda](#) as mainstream and diverse.



Screenshot of Instagram posts from anti-choice groups [Students for Life](#) and [Live Action](#). The Students for Life graphic has basic line drawings of breasts and features [debunked disinformation](#) linking abortion with breast cancer. It reads: “Having 1 abortion increases your risk of breast cancer by 44%.” The Live Action graphic reads: “4 Myths About Late-Term Abortions, And the Truth That Debunks Them.” The pink/orange ombre text overlays a pastel orange background.



Screenshot of a [Live Action Facebook advertisement](#) and [Live Action merchandise](#). The ad text reads: “We Must Stop This. Did you know the leading cause of death for children is preventable? Click here to learn the truth.” The ad features a video of two young women of color being asked, “What are your thoughts about abortion?” The merchandise is being modeled by a young woman wearing a black hat. The t-shirt she’s modeling reads, “Human rights begin in the womb,” and features an illustrated image of an olive branch.

### Falsehoods About “Protecting” and “Empowering” Women

In order to justify the false idea that restricting people’s fundamental freedoms somehow “helps” women, anti-choice activists use their extensive disinformation infrastructure to lie about the safety and necessity of abortion care. Disinformation about abortion—[particularly medication abortion care](#)—being “[harmful](#)” or “[dangerous](#)” enables them to falsely frame attacks on abortion access as “protecting” women.



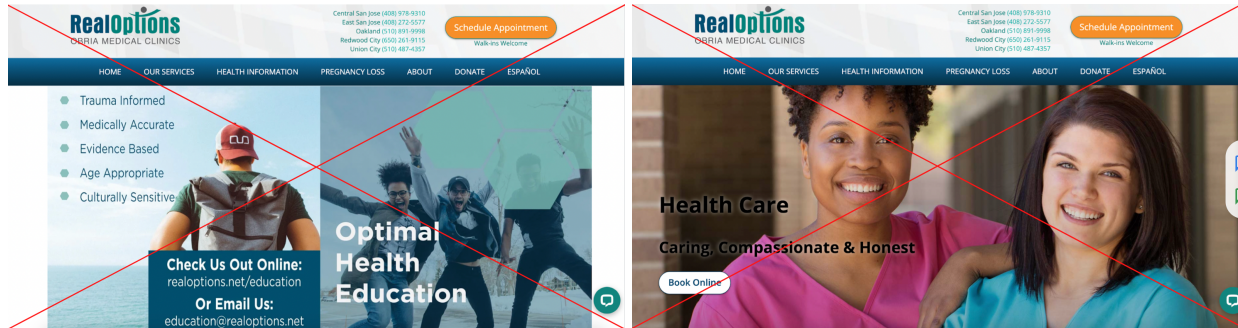
Screenshot of a Twitter [post](#) from Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life. The text reads: “When you say you’re against violence against women but proclaim women need abortion you’ve missed how much abortion hurts women.”

Anti-choice claims that [restricting abortion “empowers” women](#) rely on regressive views of gender that implicitly [idealize white, cisgender, straight, Christian mothers](#) and assume all women should want to have children—a view that anti-choice activists frequently [voice](#). Narratives painting anti-choice policies as supportive or protective of women are thinly-veiled attempts to disguise how their restrictive and controlling agenda harms women and pregnant people.

### Role of Fake Health Centers in Promoting “Feminist” Branding

Fake health centers (FHCs), sometimes called “crisis pregnancy centers,” have always [used deceptive tactics](#) to manipulate people seeking abortion care and are key sites of false “feminist” branding strategies. FHCs work to intercept people seeking information about abortion online and

mimic real clinic websites to [falsely imply](#) that they provide unbiased, comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including abortion care. Some FHC networks, such as [Obria](#), appropriate language used by the movements for reproductive health, rights, and justice by erroneously describing abstinence-only “sex education” materials as “[sex-positive](#)” and falsely claiming to be aligned with “[reproductive justice](#).”



Screenshots of the website for Real Options, a fake health center part of the Obria network. The text on the images describes Real Options as providing “compassionate and honest,” “medically accurate,” “evidence-based” healthcare, and “health education.” The images feature young people and women, including one Black woman nurse.

While anti-choice activists [cite FHCs](#) as an essential part of their [post-Roe strategy](#), the reality is that the true agenda behind fake health centers is to manipulate people through ideologically-motivated disinformation. FHCs often [offer virtually no medical services](#) and are major disseminators of health disinformation about reproductive healthcare. For instance, FHCs [prioritize](#) promoting a medically [unproven and unethical procedure](#) they describe as abortion “reversal.” Moreover, the “free” resources they claim to provide are generally conditioned [on participation](#) in ideologically-driven activities, such as “[earn while you learn](#)” classes that [promote](#) right-wing religious ideals.

### The Anti-Choice Movement’s Post-Roe Roadmap Won’t Help Women & Pregnant People

Anti-choice leaders continuously voice platitudes about “[supporting](#)” women in an attempt to drown out the reality that the Republican politicians they support have [blocked policies](#) designed to provide critical resources to parents and families. Their post-Roe roadmap, a document highlighting the anti-choice movement’s priorities if Roe is overturned, [focuses primarily on further attacking abortion access](#), not outlining specific measures to help people after they give birth.

Anti-choice activists ignore soaring maternal mortality rates disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color as well as other historically marginalized communities and overlook life-threatening disparities in access to healthcare—particularly [in states where abortion access is likely to be banned or heavily restricted](#) if Roe is overturned—in order to falsely position adoption and “safe haven” laws as a solution. Instead of advocating for a robust social safety net to help families or supporting efforts to address maternal mortality, they propose [additional funding](#) for their own ideologically-driven “services” like FHCs, maternity homes, and religious charities.



Screenshot of Twitter [post](#) from Susan B. Anthony List. The text reads: “Texas is leading the way showing how states can be pro-woman AND pro-life: \$100 Million Alternatives to abortion program [emoji of pregnant woman]. For every abortion facility in Texas there are TEN pro-life pregnancy centers providing low-cost (or free) assistance [emoji of baby]”

None of these dubious “alternatives to abortion” tangibly address the structural challenges that people making decisions about pregnancy face in the United States. Instead, they simply serve as a distraction from anti-choice efforts to take away people’s freedom to decide if, when, and how to start or grow a family. The anti-choice movement does not care about the wellbeing of women, pregnant people, or families. We must not let their long-standing attempts at “feminist” marketing obfuscate their efforts to ban abortion and impose a regressive agenda with sweeping consequences.

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