

## 1,000 rally for Women's March in Utah to protest anti-abortion laws

The Salt Lake City rally was one of 620 planned events advocating for access to abortion after Texas lawmakers passed a controversial abortion law.



(Leah Hogsten | The Salt Lake Tribune) State Street was filled with hundreds during the SLC Women's March for reproductive rights and access to safe abortions, Oct. 2, 2021. Saturday's march was held in conjunction with other marches across the country.

By Paighen Harkins

<https://www.sltrib.com/news/2021/10/02/rally-womens-march-utah/>

| Oct. 2, 2021, 4:55 p.m.

| Updated: 6:03 p.m.

It's been nearly 50 years since the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe V. Wade*, which gave pregnant people the right to an abortion without undue government restrictions.

Yet, ACLU Utah's Niki Venugopal told a crowd of more than a thousand Saturday: "We are still marching for and suing for and demanding our rights."

Most recently in Utah, the group, alongside Planned Parenthood, sued in 2019 after [state lawmakers passed a bill that banned abortions after 18 weeks of gestation](#). A federal judge has put that law on pause as it makes its way through the courts.

"And if our Utah legislators try to pass any more abortion restrictions, or anything similar to what we're seeing in Texas, (which just passed the country's strictest abortion laws), we brought one of our lawyers here today to send this message," Venugopal said, passing the microphone to her colleague Valentina De Fex.

De Fex took the mic and said simply: "We will see you in court."

The crowd erupted in cheers.



(Leah Hogsten | The Salt Lake Tribune) State Street was filled with hundreds during the SLC Women's March for reproductive rights and access to safe abortions, Oct. 2, 2021. Saturday's march was held in conjunction with other marches across the country.

The group gathered Saturday in front of Salt Lake City Hall to send a message to lawmakers and the Supreme Court: that access to abortion is an essential health care right.

This rally was one of more than 620 scheduled across the country, organizers said. It came in the wake of Texas's decision to enact a law that bans abortion as early as six weeks into a pregnancy and allows people to report and sue anyone who helps a pregnant person get an abortion after doctors can detect cardiac activity.

The Department of Justice sued Texas over the law. The case is pending.

The crowd grew from a few hundred Saturday morning outside Salt Lake City Hall to more than a thousand when the group started its march up State Street to the Capitol.

Before the group left, the crowd heard from multiple speakers, including the new Black Lives Matter leader, Rae Duckworth, who said that reproductive rights impact all women — but the impact on Black women is more pronounced.

[According to Planned Parenthood](#), "Due to systemic oppression, Black people face greater obstacles to obtaining sexual and reproductive health services than white Americans. As a result, Black people experience some of the highest rates of cervical cancer, unintended pregnancy, maternal mortality, and sexually transmitted infections in the country."

As the crowd trekked up the hill to the Capitol, they chanted, “my body, my choice” and “separation of church and state” while waving at passing motorists. Some drivers honked back.

One woman marched wearing a red dress and white bonnet, like the handmaids in Margaret Atwood’s 1985 dystopian novel “The Handmaid’s Tale,” carried a sign saying, “Make Margaret Atwood fiction again.”



(Leah Hogsten | The Salt Lake Tribune) State Street was filled with hundreds during the SLC Women's March for reproductive rights and access to safe abortions, Oct. 2, 2021. Saturday's march was held in conjunction with other marches across the country.

Another carried a pink poster board that read, “No uterus. No opinion.”

A man wearing a blue disposal face mask held a sign that said, “Imagine if a group of women made laws governing mens’ bodies.”

The rally ended at the Capitol after a mile-long trek up State Street and after several people spoke, including Democratic Rep. Angela Romero, who told attendees that there is a small but strong group of Utah lawmakers committed to protecting access to abortion in the state.

Ma Black, A DJ at KRCL, took the microphone soon after and told the crowd that access to abortion and other reproductive rights have been hard fought for racial and ethnic minorities groups and those with lower socioeconomic status. She said many women have had choices made for them by the state about their reproductive health, such as [forced sterilizations](#).

“This is the time to raise our voices to push for change,” she said.

To pave the way for future generations of daughters, sisters and mothers.



(Leah Hogsten | The Salt Lake Tribune) State Street was filled with hundreds during the SLC Women's March for reproductive rights and access to safe abortions, Oct. 2, 2021. Saturday's march was held in conjunction with other marches across the country.