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Experts in Obstetric Care and Neuroscience File a Brief in United States Supreme Court
Amici Rely on Best Available Science in the Study of Fetal Care and Pain

September 20, 2021, Washington, DC – The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), the U.S. Association for the Study of Pain (USASP), and 27 individual scientific and medical experts today submitted [an amicus brief to the Supreme Court of the United States](#) (SCOTUS) in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, a case that will be heard on December 1, 2021. In *Dobbs*, SCOTUS will consider whether the State of Mississippi can ban most abortions at 15 weeks gestation. This is the first time SCOTUS will rule on the constitutionality of a pre-viability abortion ban since *Roe v. Wade*, opening up the possibility for all states to ban abortion before viability.

The State of Mississippi and its *amici* argue that abortion should be banned at 15 weeks based on the false notion that fetuses can experience pain during early pregnancy. The State’s argument relies on “expertise” provided by Dr. Maureen Condic, who has no clinical experience in maternal-fetal care or providing pain management. Alternatively, SMFM, RCOG, and USASP rely on the [best available data](#) to address the State’s concerns related to “fetal pain,” concluding that it is impossible for a fetus to experience pain prior to viability because the necessary cortical and spinal cord structures needed to experience pain do not develop before at least 24 weeks of gestation.

The *amici* urge SCOTUS not to disturb the settled precedent based on unsupported claims that contradict both scientific evidence and the consensus of leading medical organizations.

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SMFM

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), founded in 1977, is the medical professional society for obstetricians who have additional training in high-risk, complicated pregnancies. SMFM represents more than 5,000 members who care for high-risk pregnant people and provides education, promotes research, and engages in advocacy to reduce disparities and optimize the health of high-risk pregnant people and their families. SMFM and its members are dedicated to optimizing maternal and fetal outcomes and assuring medically appropriate treatment options are available to all patients.

RCOG

The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (RBOG) works to improve the health and wellbeing of women everywhere, by setting standards for clinical practice, providing doctors with training and lifelong learning, and advocating for women's health globally. Founded in 1929, RCOG has over 16,000 members worldwide and works with partners both in the UK and globally to improve the standard of care delivered to women, encourage the study of obstetrics and gynaecology and advance the science and practice of the specialties.

USASP

The U.S. Association for the Study of Pain is the United States chapter of the International Association for the Study of Pain and represents more than 650 scientists, clinicians, and policymakers nationwide. The USASP's members work to increase the knowledge of pain, develop and disseminate evidence-based treatments of pain across the lifespan, and advocate for public policy that supports research, education, and clinical care to reduce the burden of pain.