

## U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

### Spotlight Forum on the Supreme Court's Decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health

June 23, 2026

#### Sen. Cantwell Q&A with Witnesses

[\[VIDEO\]](#)

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, Senator Murray. Thanks for getting this organized, and for your constant leadership here. Very much appreciated. And to the panelists, thank you so much for all your stories. They are so heartfelt, so meaningful, and your advocacy means so much.

I wanted to talk about our state, Washington. In 2024, my office released a report that showed that out-of-state abortion patients went up 46% and abortions provided in Washington state went up 23%. We've also documented that at least one woman is being airlifted to Washington per week due to pregnancy complications.

So, we literally are on the front lines. Some [in] Idaho, our neighboring state, [don't] provide this care. Some OB-GYNs have begun recommending that their patients purchase air ambulance insurance just to be ready, and it's clear that women are having to travel further [and] shoulder the cost and the healthcare risk.

I don't think anybody explained this to anybody, that this is what exactly we were doing. So, my colleagues have done a good job of talking about the care, but I don't think anybody is talking about the cost, and it really – talking to providers in the state of Washington, the phone calls that they get, it's crazy when you listen to the phone call.

They're like, is there a hotel, is there bus service, is there this, is there a place [for] my child. They are literally parenting, trying to deal with bringing that child with them, trying to deal with their care, trying to say, am I going to keep the cost down, how can I do this.

And I'm pretty sure, by most definitions, this is called catastrophic care, because you're paying 1/3 of your monthly income just for this care. Samantha, I was incredibly touched by your testimony. Thank you so much for being here. You truly are brave, and I'm sure your husband does need you. I'm sure he does. And to talk about Halo, thank you so much.

So, we've heard all about the role that Texas is playing on this abortion ban, but what are the additional costs that you incurred by carrying Halo to term, and what are the issues that you've had to face – financial burdens – if you want to share that?

**Samantha Casiano – Patient Advocate:** Our financial burden was, we have a landlord. She's not going to say, 'Oh, you have a funeral coming. You don't have to pay your rent.' No, we paid our rent with our late fees, we had to crowdfund, and we asked family, friends, and everyone.

We had help with NPR – a reporter that attached our GoFundMe. We had a nonprofit organization help us bury our daughter, and that's involving the embalming, that's the casket, that is her funeral service

itself. All of those fees, they just kind of stacked up, and we were lost. We didn't know what to do, and we had to ask for help.

And as we were raised, you know, you work hard for everything you have, and my husband works really hard for us, but for him not to be able to cover these things by himself, it was hard for him, and [for] both of us to ask for help and the fact that we did was heartbreaking, that we couldn't do it on our own, but we did have to ask for help for our funeral, her flowers, everything.

**Sen. Cantwell:** It's so sad, so tragic. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for you and your family. Thank you for being here. Thank you for being so brave. Kaitlyn, did you want to talk about the financial burden, your cost in traveling, [and] the risks to you and your family?

**Kaitlyn Kash – Patient Advocate:** Yeah, it was obviously devastating, but we were so grateful that we had the privilege to be able to leave the state. It happened to be right after Covid, and so we had a lot of flight points that we hadn't used. We were able to book last-minute flights.

We were able to stay with family that I had there. I had a boss that was willing to give me two weeks off while still paying me. I had someone to come stay with my son and my dogs. I mean, literally every single day it was another, 'What are we going to do about this?'

And we had an incredible support system to get through that, and I cannot imagine what families are going through when they don't have access to all of those things.

I mean, you're taking someone who is already dealing with so much, whether it is an abortion for a fetal anomaly or it is just because someone is not ready to be a parent, you're compounding trauma on trauma, and it is leaving a devastating mental health care trail.

There are not days that go by where – because I was not able to talk to my doctor before I went to the appointment, when I walked into the appointment that morning, my husband wasn't able [to] be there with me.

I was asked, do I want to get my baby's footprints? Do I want to keep my baby's remains? I had no idea I was going to be asked those questions. I was not ready. I just wanted to be at home with my dog. I just wanted out of there.

I wanted to not hit the protester with my car on the way out that had called me a murderer, and I didn't ask to do anything, and I regret that every single day that I didn't say goodbye to my baby the way that I wanted to.

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, thank you, Kaitlyn. Thank you, Alexis. This issue economically, where states are trying to – I'm sure employers are trying to say, I'll cover you, but I think it's something [like] one in five job seekers are saying, don't send me to any of those states.

So not only are women being denied great opportunities, they're also saying, I don't want to go there, and it's basically having an impact on relocation and cost. So women are bearing these unbelievable tragedies in their life, but they're also bearing all this extra cost because somebody promulgated this rule on our health care system. Are you seeing that more broadly across the United States?

**Alexis McGill Johnson – President and CEO, Planned Parenthood Federation of America:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, for those who have the benefits in their employment packages to travel, they may even be more reluctant to ask their employer [and] say, 'Hey, I need to go out of town and access this

benefit.' Those are the privileged few who live or work in an environment where they actually have a healthy benefit package that allows them to do that.

The real impact, obviously, of the Dobbs decision are for those patients or travelers who don't have access to those same benefits – people who have to take off a day of work, who may not get reimbursed for that, or have to leave at the end of a shift.

And also [to] navigate all of the challenges that many of my colleagues up here have talked about: getting access to childcare, elder care, and to think about – on the other side, from the clinic side – how to support those patients when they arrive.

I've been in many a health center where nurse practitioners [are] just carrying a toddler around, and you know, [have] a makeshift play room to ensure that they are well attended to while their parent is in recovery, and ensuring that they are all-hands on supporting every single patient who comes through those doors.

And so, as was said earlier, we will continue to make a way out of no way and support each other as best we can, but the fact that this legislation has put us into a space that we have to [do this] is actually what is criminal.

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you. Thank you.