

Women of the State of Minnesota v. Gomez: The Facts

In 1995, the Minnesota Supreme Court decided the case of *Women of the State of Minnesota by Doe v. Gomez*. This critical ruling struck down a law which limited state medical assistance funds for abortion to *only certain women* – those whose lives were endangered or who reported rape or incest – and allowed a broader interpretation of the situations in which medical assistance funds could be utilized for abortion services.

Doe v. Gomez Salient Points:

- The language used in the decision has been interpreted by scholars on both sides of the abortion debate to declare **the right to choose as a fundamental right in Minnesota**.
- Finding that the state Constitution provides greater protection for women's childbearing choices than the federal Constitution, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that **state officials cannot selectively cover pregnancy-related services by funding prenatal care and childbirth expenses while refusing to cover abortion services**.
- By refusing to fund abortion services for low-income women, the state interferes with a woman's right to choose because it adds undue financial constraints to her decision.

Doe v. Gomez Practical Implications

- Minnesota is one of 18 states whose Supreme Court has ruled that its state constitution provides greater protection for reproductive choice than does the federal Constitution.
- Since *Gomez* was decided in 1995, several states, including Florida, Texas, and Arizona, have grappled with similar cases and have turned to the *Gomez* decision for clarification on legal precedent.
- Any proposed legislation that includes cuts to, or complete bans on, state funding for abortion services is blatantly unconstitutional as a result of the *Gomez* decision and would be opposed by Planned Parenthood.