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## **PROFS Statement on Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health June 28, 2022**

On Friday, June 24, the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, a decision that reversed nearly fifty years of settled law that granted women the right to make their own reproductive health choices and to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

PROFS is deeply concerned that this decision by the Court will have profoundly negative effects upon women and families in Wisconsin, disproportionately affecting women of color and those in low-income and rural communities. The state's dormant 173-year-old statute that criminalizes abortion is poised to return Wisconsin's women to the mid nineteenth century, and Governor Tony Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a lawsuit today challenging the statute.

We are particularly concerned about the effects the Court's decision will have on the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The banning of abortion threatens the ability of our School of Medicine and Public Health to adequately train doctors specializing in obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive health care and likely means the withdrawal of accreditation for that program. The result will be fewer physicians trained by UW-Madison and less health care for the citizens of the state.

Should Wisconsin's draconian 1849 law remain in place, it's very likely that prospective UW-Madison faculty and staff members will refuse to seek employment here, and students may choose to avoid enrolling at UW-Madison given the state's limitations on reproductive health care. This may also lead to negative impacts on employee retention, as our world-class faculty and staff may choose to leave the state rather than face limited reproductive health options. The decision affects more than reproductive choice. Already, we are seeing how Dobbs has led to doctors turning away patients who have had miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies for fear of prosecution.

PROFS supports actions taken by Governor Evers, Attorney General Kaul and others to challenge the 1849 law, and to refuse prosecuting those who violate that law. PROFS urges the state's legislators, congressional delegation, and national officials to create legislation that protects reproductive health choices, restores the right to abortion in Wisconsin, and ensures that members of our community – students, staff, and faculty – are afforded those rights enshrined in the United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment: equal protection under law, the guarantee of freedom from intrusions from the state, and due process.