

**Senator Murray’s opening remarks at Senate Democrats’ State of Abortion Rights briefing on January 17, 2024—as delivered.**

*“Good morning, welcome to all of you. And I want to first off thank all of our panelists who we are going to hear from today. I want to thank all of my colleagues who will be joining us, some of them will be coming in and out as the morning goes/ But I especially want to thank Senator Schumer who will be here shortly, and Senators Stabenow, Klobuchar, Baldwin, Warren, and Cortez Masto who are co-hosting this briefing for us. And again, I want to thank everyone who is joining us today.*

*“I am here, ahead of the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, to send a message to all the Republicans who spent years crusading to overturn abortion rights—and who are now working to ban abortion nationwide: Senate Democrats will not let anyone turn away from the devastation that Republicans have caused, and we will not stop pushing to restore the federal right to abortion.*

*“Let’s get one thing clear right off the bat—the vast majority of Americans support the right to abortion. They understand that it should be women who are making decisions about their pregnancies, not politicians, not judges.*

*“And since Roe was overturned we have seen that every time abortion rights were on the ballot—abortion rights have won! And tragically, we have also seen, with brutal clarity, how women have been put in danger and made to suffer because of Republican abortion bans.*

*“I have met with providers in Washington state who are overwhelmed and doing their best to keep up with the surge of patients from states like Idaho with strict abortion bans.*

*“But that has not stopped Republicans from doubling down on extremism. Anti-choice politicians and activists are still trying to ignore the enormous damage their policies are causing or pretend that it’s not their fault.*

*“Well, anyone who is actually listening to women and families affected by Republicans’ anti-abortion crusade will tell you, Republicans’ attempts to dodge responsibility for the chaos and trauma they created will not work.*

*“Because, you don’t forget the fear of being pregnant when you don’t want to be, or the heartbreak of learning a pregnancy is not viable, or the horror of learning it is life-threatening—and knowing you are unable get the care that you need in your state because Republicans’ forced pregnancy laws.*

*“You don’t forget being investigated for having a miscarriage or driving your kid across state lines to get an abortion.*

*“You don’t forget when your doctor tells you they cannot act to save your life because they are afraid of going to jail.*

*“And you don’t ever forget losing a friend, or your wife, or your daughter because she couldn’t get the care she needed—because some politician thought their views were more important than her life.*

*“That’s not something Republicans can fix with spin, or rebranding, or by sticking their heads in the sand.*

*“This isn’t a PR problem for women—it is a living hell, and a personal nightmare.*

*“Women will not be quiet, and they will not be ignored. Certainly not while we have something to say about it.*

*“Senate Democrats are going to keep fighting to protect abortion from new Republican attacks, pass legislation like the Women’s Health Protection Act to restore and expand abortion rights, and lift up the voices and stories of people across the country who are suffering as a result of Republicans’ cruelty.*

*“And that’s why we are here today. And I really appreciate everyone who joining us today to make sure that these incredibly important stories are told. And with that I’m going to turn it over to our panelists to share what their personal live has been like. And I’m going to start with Dr. Dennard who has come here with a critical story that all of us need to understand and hear.”*

###