



The protest began at Swanny City Park. [Rachel Fixsen/Moab Sun News]



Protestors chanted in front of the Grand County building. [Rachel Fixsen/Moab Sun News]



Protestors circled the intersection of Main and Center. [Alison Harford/Moab Sun News]



Protestors chanted the phrase, “we will not give up the fight, abortion is a human right.” [Alison Harford/Moab Sun News]



[Alison Harford/Moab Sun News]



[Rachel Fixsen/Moab Sun News]

## Protest

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At the demonstration, some protesters carried signs with information on existing organizations that help people seeking abortions. Other signs invoked the late liberal Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg; many said simply, “Abortion is a human right.”

“For me it’s not a political issue—it’s a human right,” Zale said. “This is a right that we took for granted.”

In addition to spreading information about organizations that help people seeking abortions, some in the group—which is for now loosely called the “Moab Full Freedom Coalition”—want to advocate on other issues that affect women, like maternity leave and childcare.

“All of us would also like to see better involvement in state politics,” Zale said. “There’s a lot more ramifications of a law like this.”

Trista Winder, another of the organizers of the march, also mentioned sex education as an issue the group is interested in.

Winder has lived in Moab for about a year and half—she and her husband

recently bought the cycling shop Bike Fiend. She feels strongly about the right to abortion.

“I myself had an abortion that saved my life,” she said. About ten years ago, she was 20 weeks pregnant when she was diagnosed with low amniotic fluid. There was no way the baby would survive, she was told, and her own life was in danger. She was able to have the procedure done at a Utah hospital.

Utah’s current law—as well as the “trigger law” that was meant to go into effect immediately following the Supreme Court decision, but is currently under an injunction—does allow abortions in cases where the life of the fetus or the mother is threatened. However, many women fear that even in these cases, restrictions will slow down decision-making during medical emergencies. And, many people view abortion as a valid choice outside of those parameters.

Winder noted that another important aspect of the group is to offer community and a platform for people to express their views.

“It’s important to remind women that they have a voice,” Winder said.

The rights and views of women are important to the group, but organizers

also emphasized that it’s inclusive.

“It’s not just for women,” said Faith Dickey, another organizer. “It’s for anyone this impacts.”

Marchers braved sweltering temperatures to gather at Swanny Park on Monday afternoon. Dickey gave a brief introduction and guidance on safety and courtesy before the group started across the lawn to the beat of a drummer near the front. Leaders prompted chants like “Hands off my body” and “Abortion is healthcare.” The streets were relatively quiet aside from the marchers, but some observers responded—diners waiting for a table outside of a restaurant clapped, some drivers honked in support, some bystanders had a negative reaction. The marchers filled sidewalks for several blocks as they made their way to the courthouse. A Moab City Police vehicle crawled alongside the string of people—the organizers had been in touch with the department about their plans ahead of time. The activists regrouped in front of the Grand County building to chant before returning to the park.

“I think it went great,” Dickey said after the demonstration. “We were all pretty stoked on the turnout and we’re looking forward to organizing more.”

For example, she envisions call-parties where group members gather and telephone politicians on specific issues.

Dickey and others in the group were dismayed, however, to learn that sometime on July 4 the Arches New Hope Pregnancy Center, a local crisis resource center, was vandalized. [See “Pregnancy center vandalized,” page 3.] Though the group disagrees with the center’s anti-abortion stance, Dickey said, they aren’t against the center.

“They do provide resources to people who need them,” Dickey said.

The vandal or vandals have not been identified at this time.

Organizers of the march all expressed a desire to act within the bounds of what’s legal, while still resisting what they see as the obstruction of a human right.

“Women aren’t just going to take this,” Zale said. “We’re protesting. We’re half the population—we’re not just going to let you take away our rights.” She added that while abortion might not direct men’s health directly, the issue certainly affects their lives.

“I’m never going to stop trying,” Winder said. “And the women and men that I’ve met—they’re never going to stop trying.”