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Amy Vilela's statement on abortion

LAS VEGAS—In response to the ongoing Supreme Court effort to overturn Roe v. Wade, Democratic Candidate for Nevada's First Congressional District, Amy Vilela, released the following statement on abortion rights and **her personal experience with abortion**:

The decision to get an abortion in our country can be very difficult, and women who choose to undergo the procedure do so for a variety of valid reasons. Sharing those stories publicly can be even more difficult. As our radically conservative Supreme Court works to overturn Roe v. Wade and restrict our rights to abortion and autonomy over our bodies and our reproductive care, I believe it can be incredibly impactful for those of us who have had abortions to share our stories when we find ourselves in a position to do so, as difficult as it may be. That's why I'm choosing to share my own story publicly today.

In 2006, as a single mother with three young children, I found myself in a very abusive relationship. As I planned to move to get distance from a dangerous situation, I found out I was pregnant. I spent the following week in shock and grieving. The tears flowed as I went over every possible scenario, trying to find a way that I could continue with the pregnancy. I grappled with the history of being taught that abortion was murder—something I know many women will relate to. I considered adoption, but the father threatened to take the child. I considered continuing with the pregnancy, but that would've meant maintaining contact with a violent man for the foreseeable future. I also went over my personal budget and came to the conclusion that I simply could not afford another child. I was already struggling to afford to feed my children healthy meals, and there was no viable solution that would allow me to carry this pregnancy to term. I knew I had to have an abortion.

When I arrived at Planned Parenthood, there were protestors lining the street. I was terrified. I sat in my car and cried at the prospect of having to wade through them in order to get the care I needed. It had already been heartbreaking enough to arrive at my decision, and now I had to endure the harassment and shame that these protestors hurl at women who find themselves in my situation. I trembled and cried as I hurried past them into the clinic. Once inside, I saw the other women who were there—most of whom were as visibly saddened, worried, and scared as I was.

Despite having access to this critical care, I was still forced to view an ultrasound of the fetus in my womb before I was able to have my procedure. I remember laying there awake, repeating 'I am so sorry,' as the doctor performed my abortion. There was very little aftercare for women at that time, and I was forced to suffer in silence due to the shame that society forced upon me and women like me.

That day was difficult, but it was necessary. There's no telling where I would be today if I was forced to carry that pregnancy to term. Now, the Supreme Court is trying to rip away the right of every woman in America to choose her future. Abortion is reproductive care. Reproductive care is healthcare. And healthcare is a human right. We are all in this together. We deserve more.

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Amy Vilela grew up in poverty, relying on programs like WIC and SNAP in order to make ends meet as a single-mother. She took classes at night while working multiple jobs to become the first in her family to earn a degree. She became a national advocate for Medicare for All after her daughter Shalynne died at the hands of our nation's profit-driven healthcare system. After working her way up to become a CFO, Amy has since retooled her professional experience to provide vital campaign services to other progressive candidates. In 2020, serving as a State Co-chair, Amy led the charge for Bernie Sanders' landslide victory in the Nevada caucuses.

Amy and her family first moved to Nevada when her husband, Major David Vilela, was transferred to Creech Air Force Base. If elected, she would be the first ever active duty military spouse to serve in Congress. In addition to Congresswoman Cori Bush and Senator Nina Turner, Amy's campaign has attracted national attention and has been endorsed by Brand New Congress, Sunrise Movement Las Vegas, the Center for Biological Diversity, and more.

