By Julia Cash

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The First Amendment was a huge step in the betterment of our country. It gave Americans the right to express their opinions and ideas, practice their chosen religion, raise awareness, advocate for change, and so much more. But what good is being able to express our opinions and attempt to fix our country’s issues when our words don’t matter to the people in charge? What good is raising awareness and having the right to petition when our government knows what’s wrong, they just don’t care? What’s the point of freedom when we’re all still trapped within the confines of men’s persecution?

With the overturning of Roe v. Wade, women lost rights to their own bodies. Rights that, when taken away, give us fewer rights than a corpse. You can’t take someone’s organs without their permission, even after death. But we’re now forcing women, or girls, to carry a child that could kill both of them, or one that was the result of rape or incest. Women now have less bodily autonomy than the dead. Not that it matters, because despite the freedom of speech we’re said to have, no one listens to what we have to say. Countless women spoke out against the overturning of Roe v. Wade. There were men who did the same, but all our words and all our reasons meant nothing to those in power. The common sense that should’ve told people we deserve rights over our own bodies didn’t stop them from taking them away. Despite what we’re told, our opinion doesn’t change anything. The people in power can take away our rights, but we can’t take our own side.

Mike Johnson believes “Every American woman has a duty to birth at least one able-bodied worker.” Not a choice. Not a right. A duty. To birth a worker. Not a citizen, a voter, or a human being. A worker. But that’s not an issue, because we’re free, right? We’re allowed to express our concerns and petition the government. A government who couldn’t care less about anything we have to say. Who takes away rights our ancestors fought so hard to obtain in the first place. So ask yourself this: Was this what they had planned? Was this what our Founding Fathers wanted? Was this what the suffragists fought for?

We’re not supposed to repeat history. That’s what teachers tell students when we ask why we should care and why we learn about wars and our country’s past. “Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.” We’re learning. We’re attempting to better our country. So, let me ask one thing to anyone in the government, or in the world, who supports the Roe v. Wade overturning or Mike Johnson. To any of the men in power who don’t use that power for good. To those who use it to create laws against women’s bodies and disregard their First Amendment right to speak up: We’re trying to fix it. Why aren’t you?