

This is Casey Dolan with your local news for Wednesday, May 4, 2022 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

About fifty sign-wielding women along with a smaller huddle of male supporters braved a cold drizzle outside the empty Jefferson County Courthouse yesterday evening to protest what a leaked draft opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court indicates will be a complete overturn of the suite of decisions over the last fifty years that have protected women's reproductive rights. Similar demonstrations occurred across the nation. The demonstrations came at the urging of <https://front.moveon.org/> in response to the recent leak this past Monday by *Politico* of a draft majority opinion by the Supreme Court, written by Justice Samuel Alito, to reverse the 49-year-old landmark ruling, *Roe v. Wade*, that the Constitution of the United States protects a pregnant woman's liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction. All conservative justices on the Court have previously acknowledged precedence in *Roe v. Wade*, while simultaneously arguing the ruling could be "reexamined."

If the majority opinion should become law, it would have serious consequences in a state's decision to adjudicate abortions, the role in which religious beliefs will play in those decisions and will fundamentally raise issues on the extent to which the government can exercise power over the individual right of a woman to make choices for her own body. The Court is predominantly male.

In other news, Jefferson County Public Health reports that 45 new cases of COVID-19 have been added between last Friday, April 29 and yesterday Tuesday, May 3. 87 cases are in active isolation and two hospitalizations. The total number of cases is 3,508. County Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry notes in her weekly update that cases are rising on the west coast and that the numbers may be undercounted in most of the country because the results of home antigen tests go unreported. Significantly, home tests count for more than 70% of our local positive cases.

If you are 65 and older, test positive for COVID-19, and are at a high risk for severe disease, there is a 5-day course of oral medication available. In Jefferson County, contact the Jefferson Healthcare Covid Nurse Consult Hotline (360-344-3094) for information on how to access the prescription. And please call that hotline if you are experiencing any Covid-like symptoms, like shortness of breath.

Concerns have been expressed by Charlie Boisner, the Communications Director in the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), over reports of the false representation by canvassers in the Washington Voter Research Project as election workers. Canvassing and door-knocking is legal, but Boisner's office has received complaints from at least 11 counties since November 2021 of individuals claiming to either work for, or on behalf of, the county election office or OSOS. Questions asked of residents include voter registration information, whether someone lives at a residence, and other questions of a private nature. Specific counties have not been publicly identified.

Secretary of State Steve Hobbs emphatically responded, "I want to reassure Washington voters that you are under no obligation to answer any questions from, or disclose information to, an individual or organization you are not comfortable or familiar with. No one from the Office of the Secretary of State or any county elections office knows or will ever ask you how you voted; nor will they visit your home to verify information."

The Everett *Herald* reports that sponsors of Initiative 1929, the opponents of the state's new capital gains tax, can begin gathering signatures on an initiative seeking to repeal the law after Thurston County Superior Court Judge Indu Thom approved final wording for how the measure would be described on the ballot and the initiative petitions. The law, signed by Gov. Jay Inslee in May 2021, took effect Jan. 1 and is projected to generate \$415 million for early learning and child care programs in 2023, the first year of collections.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Thursday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan, thank you for listening.