

**CNN**

## Abortion rights groups reach petition threshold to put abortion on Florida ballot in 2024

By [Carlos Suarez](#) and Denise Royal, CNN

2 minute read

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Abortion rights activists hold signs reading "Abortion is Healthcare" as they rally in Miami, Florida, after the overturning of Roe Vs. Wade by the Supreme Court on June 24, 2022. Chanda Khanna/AFP/Getty Images

**CNN —** A coalition of Florida abortion rights supporters announced on Friday they have gathered enough signatures to put a state constitutional amendment protecting the right to an abortion on the ballot in 2024. Election officials have verified 910,946 petitions submitted by Floridians Protecting Freedom, according to the Florida Division of Elections [website](#).

The group said it needed 891,523 verified petitions to make it on the ballot. They said they expect to receive official notification from the Florida Division of Elections in the coming weeks.

If the measure makes it on to the ballot, Florida will join several other states where voters have weighed in directly on reproductive rights since [the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade](#). The initiative could also boost voter turnout, as it has in states like [Ohio](#), which could give Democrats an advantage as President Joe Biden looks to secure another term.

"The fact that we only launched our campaign eight months ago and we've already reached our petition goal speaks to the unprecedented support and momentum there is to get politicians out of our private lives and health care decisions," said campaign director Lauren Brenzel.

"Most initiative campaigns never make it this far. The ones that do usually spend far more or take much longer to qualify, which is why we're so confident that voters will approve our amendment once they're given a chance to vote," Brenzel added.

The Florida Supreme Court still must approve the language of the ballot measure which is being challenged by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody.

The proposed amendments reads, “No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient’s health, as determined by the patient’s healthcare provider.”

In a legal brief filed in October, Moody asked the Court to kill the amendment, arguing the language is vague and confusing.

Moody argued that it uses language aimed at tricking voters. The brief specifically takes aim at terms like “health,” “viability” and “healthcare provider” and says they are too ambiguous.

Oral arguments are scheduled on February 7 in front of the Florida Supreme Court. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, appointed five of the seven justices on the current court, giving it a conservative majority.

Should the measure make it on the ballot and be approved by at least 60% voters, the amendment would undo Florida’s current 15-week ban on abortions. In 2023, lawmakers passed a 6-week ban, which will only go into effect if the 15-week ban is upheld by the Florida Supreme Court.

*This story has been updated with additional information.*  
CNN’s Arit John contributed to this report.

## **Florida six-week abortion ban will soon become law, but voters will consider a constitutional amendment this fall**

By Carlos Suarez, Denise Royal and Jack Forrest, CNN

7 minute read

Updated 11:01 AM EDT, Tue April 2, 2024

Abortion rights proponents and anti-abortion activists voice their opinions outside the Florida Supreme Court on Wednesday, February 7, in Tallahassee, Florida. Alicia Devine/Tallahassee Democrat/USA Today Network

**CNN** — The Florida Supreme Court on Monday paved the way for the state's six-week abortion ban to take effect, while allowing Floridians to decide in the fall whether to enshrine abortion protections in the state's constitution.

By upholding Florida's current 15-week ban on abortion, the state Supreme Court triggered a six-week abortion ban approved by Florida lawmakers last year. The law will take effect in 30 days. But in a separate ruling, the court approved the wording of a proposed state constitutional amendment that would protect the right to an abortion in Florida, clearing it to go on the ballot as Amendment 4 this November when it could potentially undo both bans. Constitutional amendments in Florida need the support of at least 60% of voters to be approved.

Monday's rulings will make Florida one of the most restrictive states in the country to obtain an abortion and set up a presidential-year fight over reproductive rights in the Sunshine State. The Biden campaign on Monday cast Florida, a longtime swing state that has trended Republican in recent elections, as "winnable" in November as it seeks to mobilize voters around abortion rights. With the measure poised to appear on the state's ballot, Florida will join several other states, including Michigan and Ohio, where voters have weighed in directly on reproductive rights since the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. The initiative could also boost voter turnout in what is expected to be a close rematch between President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump.

In January, Floridians Protecting Freedom, the coalition behind the ballot initiative, gathered just under a million signatures of registered voters to qualify for Florida Supreme Court review. Justices had to decide if the amendment's language is clear, unambiguous and would not confuse voters. The court also had to decide if the language on the ballot deals with a single subject. Both legal requirements had to be met for the amendment to appear on the ballot.

The wording of the proposed amendment that will appear on the ballot reads:

"No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion."

That language was challenged last year by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody, who asked the court to kill the amendment due to language she argued was vague and confusing, with the aim of tricking voters.

The justices on Monday said in their opinion, "it cannot be said that the ballot summary will mislead voters regarding the actual text of the proposed amendment."

Lauren Brenzel, campaign director for Yes on 4, said in a statement, "This is our chance to engage in direct democracy to stop these unpopular and harmful policies."

"We are thrilled Floridians will have the opportunity to reclaim their bodily autonomy and freedom from government interference by voting for Amendment 4 this November," Brenzel said. "Today's ruling also underscores the crucial role of Florida's ballot initiative process, which provides voters an important opportunity to take the reins when politicians aren't representing our interests."

Both Biden and Trump reacted to the ruling on Tuesday. In a statement released by the White House, Biden condemned the “extreme” decision, while Trump’s campaign said the former president “supports preserving life but has also made clear that he supports states’ rights because he supports the voters’ right to make decisions for themselves.”

### **Ruling on abortion access**

Florida’s Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis last April signed the law banning most abortions after six weeks, before many women know that they are pregnant.

Victims of rape, incest and human trafficking could obtain an abortion up to 15 weeks into a pregnancy, under the legislation, if the woman provides a restraining order, police report, medical record or other evidence.

The bill would also ban doctors from prescribing an abortion via telehealth and require medication for abortion be dispensed by a physician, not by mail.

The bill’s enactment, though, was stalled after Planned Parenthood and other abortion rights groups sued to overturn a law signed by DeSantis in 2022 to ban abortions after 15 weeks — a restriction left in place while the legal challenge played out.

The 15-week ban does not include exceptions for rape, incest or human trafficking, and a pregnancy cannot be terminated after 15 weeks unless the mother is at serious risk or a fatal fetal abnormality is detected if two physicians confirm the diagnosis in writing.

For decades, courts in Florida have blocked legislative attempts to restrict abortion in the state. The state Supreme Court in 1989 determined that a privacy clause in the state constitution “is clearly implicated in a woman’s decision of whether or not to continue her pregnancy.”

Those protections for years made Florida a sanctuary for women seeking abortions throughout the South as neighboring states over time moved to restrict the procedure. In 2020, Florida saw 19.1 legal abortions per 1,000 women, the highest rate of any state in the country.

But on Monday, the court — which has five DeSantis appointees — retreated from the decadeslong protections linking the privacy provision in the state constitution with a woman’s right to an abortion, allowing the ban to move forward.

“The majority concludes that the public understanding of the right of privacy did not encompass the right to an abortion. However, the dominance of Roe in the public discourse makes it inconceivable that in 1980, Florida voters did not associate abortion with the right of privacy,” the opinion said.

That change will have a tremendous impact on abortion access in the southeastern United States. Virginia becomes the closest state for women in Florida to seek abortion access after six weeks with many southern states banning abortion almost entirely.

“This ruling is a grave setback to human rights in our state,” said Alexandra Mandado, president and CEO for Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida.

“It signals a dangerous precedent of government intrusion into our personal, private lives and medical decisions. This decision triggers a near-total abortion ban, hindering access to care for Floridians. It particularly endangers vulnerable communities, including those with low incomes, in rural areas, and facing discrimination,” Mandado said in a statement.

### **Court also rules on recreational marijuana amendment**

The court Monday also approved ballot language on Amendment 3, which will allow Florida voters to decide whether to legalize recreational marijuana in November.

The constitutional amendment could authorize the use of recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older. It would allow people to possess up to three ounces of marijuana.

The proposal was challenged by Moody before the state Supreme Court in November 2023. She questioned the amendment’s language and its potential to violate a requirement that ballot initiatives stick to a single subject. The justices rejected both arguments in their majority opinion. The amendment will also need approval from 60% of voters to pass.

In 2016, Florida voters legalized medical marijuana through a constitutional amendment, but a year later, then-Gov. Rick Scott signed a law that banned the smoking of marijuana in all forms. But DeSantis, in his very first bill signed into law as governor in 2019, legalized smokable medical marijuana again in Florida.

A CNN investigation last year raised questions about DeSantis’ record on catering to special interests and campaign donors as he was courted by marijuana interests who helped bankroll his campaign. The investigation showed how DeSantis repeatedly intersected with a cast of players in the state’s budding cannabis industry to his benefit and sometimes to theirs, with the new law helping fuel what would become a billion-dollar industry in Florida.

### **Biden campaign sets its sights on the Sunshine State**

Biden’s campaign argued in a new memo Monday that the president’s campaign “is in a stronger position to win Florida this cycle than he was in 2020,” as it seeks to mobilize voters around abortion rights while contrasting Biden’s record with that of Trump.

“Make no mistake: Florida is not an easy state to win, but it is a winnable one for President Biden, especially given Trump’s weak, cash-strapped campaign, and serious vulnerabilities within his coalition,” Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez wrote in the memo.

Trump has carried the state twice before – in 2016, he narrowly defeated Hillary Clinton by roughly 100,000 votes, while he widened his margin in 2020, defeating Biden 51.2% to 47.9%.

Still, the Biden campaign ended February with \$71 million in available cash in his principal campaign account – more than twice the \$33.5 million in cash reserves held by Trump’s campaign – which, along with the issue of abortion, they believe leaves an opening to flip the state blue come November.

“As we’ve seen in election after election, protecting abortion rights is mobilizing a diverse and growing segment of voters to help buoy Democrats up and down the ballot,” Chavez Rodriguez wrote Monday, pointing to the Florida Supreme Court’s Monday ruling on the proposed amendment.

*This story has been updated with additional information.*

*CNN’s Steve Contorno, DJ Judd, Scott Glover, Randi Kaye, Nelli Black, Michelle Lou and Brandon Griggs contributed to this report.*

## **Florida abortion providers prepare for a public health crisis as state’s 6-week abortion ban draws closer**

By Lauren Mascarenhas, Carlos Suarez and Denise Royal, CNN

6 minute read

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People gather outside the Florida Supreme Court, where justices heard arguments on a proposed ballot issue regarding abortion, on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Tallahassee. Brendan Farrington/AP/File

**CNN** — At 19-years-old, Kelly Flynn was a patient seeking an abortion at a North Carolina abortion clinic. It wasn’t long before she began working at the same clinic, drawing on her experience to offer kindness and assistance to the patients around her.

“The work really found me,” she said.

Flynn now runs that clinic and four others across North Carolina, Virginia and Florida. As president and CEO of A Woman’s Choice, she’s watched her clinics become a lifeline for patients in the South, where access to abortion is rapidly narrowing.

In Florida, the state Supreme Court issued a ruling Monday that triggered a six-week abortion ban approved by state lawmakers last year. On May 1, it will replace the state's current 15-week ban.

"I could never imagine when I had my abortion 20-some years ago that I wouldn't have that option," Flynn said. "So many people don't know that they're even pregnant at six weeks."

In the wake of the court ruling, providers with A Woman's Choice and other clinics across the region are preparing for what they say will be a public health crisis. Their priority is getting vital medical care to the patients who will inevitably be shut out by the impending restrictions.

### **Navigating an abortion care desert**

Flynn says A Woman's Choice will not close the doors to its Jacksonville clinic. "Patients still need a place to go. They still need a place to go to figure out what's next," she said.

In many cases, that means physically getting the patients to providers who are legally able to help them.

"They're all stepping up and saying, 'You know what, we'll travel with these patients if that's what we need to do,'" Flynn said of her staff.

"We do have some money set aside to help patients with things like logistics and travel, gas, and food and diapers, but it's a huge inconvenience for patients to have to travel over 1,000 miles to be able to have access to this care," she added.

Flynn said their clinics, particularly in North Carolina, are seeing patients who cannot access abortion care in states like Texas, Louisiana and Tennessee. However, Florida's six-week abortion ban is a huge blow to access in the region.

Last year, about 1 in 12 abortions nationwide and 1 in 3 abortions in the South were performed in Florida, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive health research organization that supports abortion rights. More than 9,000 people traveled from other states to get an abortion in Florida in 2023, the data shows. That's around twice as many as 2020.

[VIDEO](#)

Planned Parenthood, a major abortion provider in the region, says they have already been connecting Florida patients and others to out-of-state care. Their closest option is North Carolina, where abortion is allowed up to 12 weeks into pregnancy. Next is Virginia, where it is allowed prior to the third trimester.

“Right now the state of Florida sees 84,000 patients [a year] for abortion care,” said Alexandra Mandado, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida. “The stark reality is that the fabric of abortion care in our nation cannot absorb 84,000 patients.”

“The entire South now, in a month, will be a desert for abortion care,” she added. In the meantime, Florida abortion providers are working to see as many patients as possible before the six-week ban goes into effect.

Mandado says their clinics are opening up more ultrasound appointments to help confirm pregnancy and help with pregnancy-dating. They are also working on educating patients about the current reproductive care landscape, including when and where they can receive care.

“In the last year, we’ve hired more physicians – seeing this come down the pike – and we’ve flown in physicians from other states where we need them as well,” Mandado said.

Flynn said her clinics are rearranging schedules or double booking to accommodate the demand. That will mean increased wait times, but Flynn says patients are willing to wait.

“I’ve had patients that say, ‘I will wait here for 10 hours, as long as I walk out of here not pregnant,’” she said.

### **Patients in danger**

With extreme restrictions on abortion care, providers are concerned that patients will take matters into their own hands.

“When a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, she doesn’t want to be pregnant,” Flynn said.

“We fear patients are going to try to handle this themselves, and we’re going to see an uptick in patient injuries and miscarriages that are not managed appropriately,” she said. “We anticipate a lot of the ER’s are going to be starting to fill up with patients that are trying to manage their abortion on their own because they’re that desperate.”

Patients have already been forced to carry pregnancies against their will, with life-altering and sometimes life-threatening consequences, Mandado says.

“We’re starting to see people with compromised fertility when one pregnancy goes wrong and they’re not able to access abortion care – people that are hemorrhaging, that are having infections of the uterus that lead to infertility,” said Dr. Cherise Felix, a Planned Parenthood physician practicing in Florida.

Felix says she’s already had to turn patients away who are past the state’s 15-week limit for an abortion.

“You can just see the confusion set in. Most of the time they will cry. Sometimes we will cry with them,” Felix said.

### **Abortion on the ballot this fall**

The Florida Supreme Court issued another ruling Monday, approving the wording of a proposed constitutional amendment that would protect the right to an abortion in Florida before fetal viability – approximately 24 weeks into pregnancy – or to protect patient health. The initiative will hit ballots in November and, if approved, could void both the 15-week and six-week abortion ban.

The amendment will need 60% of the vote to pass.

Even if voters approve the ballot initiative, experts say abortion rights in Florida may not be settled.

In her dissent, Justice Jamie R. Grosshans wrote the ballot amendment language was misleading.

“The voter may think this amendment results in settling this issue once and for all. It does not. Instead, this amendment returns abortion issues back to the courts to interpret scope, boundary, definitions, and policy, effectively removing it from the people and their elected representatives,” she wrote.

Some constitutional law experts believe the amendment leaves an opening for challenges, where a court could be asked to determine whether an unborn child has a right to life under Florida’s constitution.

Still, abortion rights advocates are throwing their support behind the ballot measure, hopeful it will restore access to patients who need it.

“If it passes, the people of Florida will have decided to protect the right to an abortion to some degree,” University of Miami law professor Caroline Mala Corbin said. “We’ll have to see.”

Flynn said A Woman’s Choice will be advocating for the measure and working to get as many voters registered as possible. She’s optimistic that it will pass.

“It’s not right that the politicians get to control the choices of patients and how they choose to want to move your family forward,” she said.

CNN’s Deidre McPhillips contributed to this report.

## **Abortion rights: New state bans, yet another Supreme Court case and Biden’s Florida dream**

Analysis by [Zachary B. Wolf](#), CNN

6 minute read

Updated 9:19 AM EDT, Wed April 24, 2024

Emmie Reed marches in a "Rally to Stop the Six-Week Abortion Ban" held at Lake Eola Park in Orlando, Florida, on April 13, 2024. Joe Raedle/Getty Images

**CNN** — Courts, legislatures, presidential campaigns and everyday Americans are all still grappling with the end of Roe v. Wade two years ago.

### **In the courts**

The US Supreme Court will hear its second abortion-rights case in as many months Wednesday, when it will consider whether hospitals have an obligation under federal law to provide emergency abortions to women who are in medical emergencies.

### **In legislatures and state governments**

A restrictive, six-week abortion law in the once-key electoral state of Florida goes into effect on May 1 and has Democrats hoping to use the issue to make it a battleground once again. The new Florida law has limited exemptions for rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother.

A restrictive 1864 law goes back into effect for the first time in anyone's lifetime in Arizona as early as June 8, according to the state attorney general in an online post trying to explain the law for citizens, although she says things are in "flux." The state House has so far squashed efforts to repeal the 160-year-old abortion ban, which includes only an exemption to protect the life of the mother, but the state Senate has left the door open. Supporters of repealing the bill hope to try again in the state House to get a vote on their repeal measure.

### **In the election**

President Joe Biden visited Florida to focus on abortion rights Tuesday. Vice President Kamala Harris was in Arizona recently, and she talked there to CNN's Edward-Isaac Dovere, saying she hopes to take on the role of prosecutor against former President Donald Trump for appointing one-third of the Supreme Court that overturned Roe v. Wade.

Biden and Harris very much want to protect abortion rights in federal law but currently lack the votes in both the House and Senate. Trump has said he would leave abortion policy to the states rather than try to implement a nationwide abortion restriction.

Referendums placing the issue of abortion rights before voters will be on the ballot in Arizona and Florida.

### **New reality**

It is the cases currently before the Supreme Court that could have the most direct effect on the new reality for pregnant American women. Justices will hear arguments Wednesday regarding a federal law from 1986 that is supposed to require hospitals that receive federal money to stabilize the health of emergency room patients.

The Biden administration sued Idaho over its strict abortion ban, which does include a narrow exception for when the life of the mother is at stake but does not allow for abortion when the mother is in a medical emergency that is not yet life threatening.

CNN's Tierney Sneed has a larger look at the Idaho case, which she notes "has proceeded somewhat under the radar" and not attracted the same amount of attention as a separate case where the Supreme Court is considering the Food and Drug Administration's approval of a drug that has been used in medical abortions for decades. Read more from Sneed.

## **Fleeing their own states for care**

There is a growing number of stories of pregnant women in distress but denied emergency care in states with outright abortion bans or restrictive laws.

The emergency room issue going before the Supreme Court would not have affected Jen Adkins, a woman CNN profiled in February. Adkins felt she needed to rush six hours up the freeway to Portland, Oregon, when doctors in Idaho told her that her fetus likely had a disorder that could result in a miscarriage and that continuing with the pregnancy could harm her, but that they couldn't perform an abortion.

## **'Life flight insurance'**

In their report about Adkins, CNN's Meg Tirrell and John Bonifield describe something new doctors are recommending for pregnant women in states with tight abortion restrictions. Tirrell and Bonifield write:

*Dr. Julie Lyons, a family medicine physician across the state in Hailey, near Sun Valley, who's also a plaintiff in the lawsuit, said she now discusses "life flight insurance" with pregnant patients in their first prenatal visits, in case they have a pregnancy complication that doctors can't treat in Idaho.*

*"It's a little bit terrifying to know that we can't practice our full scope, that we are now needing to manage and triage patients, often outside of the state, to get the reproductive health care that they need," Lyons said.*

Another woman, Allie Phillips, flew to New York from Tennessee to get away from her state's restrictive abortion law and obtain care rather than carry her nonviable fetus to term. Now she's running for a seat in the Tennessee House of Representatives, part of a "Dobbs effect" of women affected by the end of Roe v. Wade getting involved in politics. (Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization is the 2022 decision that overturned Roe.)

Last year, a Texas woman, Amanda Zurawski, testified in the US Senate after she was denied an abortion when she experienced complications with her pregnancy. She was later given an emergency abortion after going into septic shock. Zurawski is suing the state of Texas.

## **Hear how a Texas woman almost died after being**

03:01

## **Abortion rights strategy**

Democrats are hoping to harness anger and fear about the loss of reproductive rights in Florida, Arizona and other states to help them in November.

Biden's trip to Florida Tuesday to highlight lack of abortion access in Trump's adopted home is just one event in a strategic effort to focus on abortion rights and argue that exemptions to restrictive abortion laws are not working in states that have them.

First lady Jill Biden, for instance, invited Kate Cox, a Texas woman, to sit with her at this year's State of the Union address. Cox fled Texas to obtain an abortion just before the state Supreme Court denied her access to the care under the medical exemption in Texas' abortion law. Read more from CNN's Priscilla Alvarez and Michael Williams about the Biden campaign's strategy.

## **Harris settles into new role**

Dovere interviewed Harris in Arizona, where a state Supreme Court ruling and lack of action in the Republican-controlled legislature mean the near-total abortion ban from 1864 will likely again be law in the state.

Harris, he wrote, is taking on the role of a political prosecutor during the coming election. She will try to lay out the case that Trump, who appointed justices to overturn Roe, will take away freedoms if he's returned to the White House.

From Dovere's report:

*"The prosecutor approach is really about just deconstructing an issue," she said. "It's presenting and reminding folks about the empirical evidence that shows us exactly how we arrived at this point. ... He can't hide from this stuff."*

*Just before coming on stage in Arizona, Harris and a few aides scrambled to add in a line to go right at what Trump had said minutes before — that the US Supreme Court's Dobbs decision that overturned Roe v. Wade is "working the way it is supposed to."*

Women facing the prospect of needing to seek a court order for an emergency abortion or being forced out of state are unlikely to agree.

*This story has been updated with additional information.*

## **Florida's 6-week abortion ban takes effect today**

By Deidre McPhillips, CNN

5 minute read

Updated 7:02 AM EDT, Wed May 1, 2024

A woman who chose to remain anonymous has her vitals checked before receiving an abortion at a Planned Parenthood Abortion Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. A six-week ban takes effect in the state on May 1. Chandan Khanna/AFP/Getty Images

**CNN —** A stricter abortion law that takes effect in Florida on Wednesday — dropping the state’s 15-week ban to a six-week ban — will likely affect thousands of people seeking abortion care within the first month alone.

Florida has become a key abortion access point amid widespread restrictions that have taken hold in the region in the two years since the US Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision overturned Roe v. Wade. It’s also one of the country’s most populous states.

Last year, 1 of every 3 abortions in the South — and about 1 in every 12 nationwide — happened in Florida, according to data from the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization focused on sexual and reproductive health that supports abortion rights. In 2023, there were about 7,000 abortions in Florida each month, and more than 9,000 people traveled from other states to get an abortion in Florida throughout the year, the data shows.

Many women don’t know that they’re pregnant six weeks after their last menstrual period, and other states that have enacted laws with this early gestation limit saw significant cuts to abortion care. In Texas, the number of abortions provided within the formal health-care system dropped by about half after a six-week abortion ban took effect in 2021, and there were thousands more births than expected in the following year. In South Carolina, there was a 70% decrease in abortions just one month after the state enforced a six-week limit.

But tighter restrictions in Florida could have an even more significant effect than historical trends suggest because Florida has been absorbing patients from other states that already have stricter limits. So far this year, more than 1,300 people from other states have traveled to Florida for an abortion, according to data from the state health agency — nearly a tenth of all abortions in the state so far in 2024.

### **Current status of abortion access across the United States**

Of the 16 states in the South, nine have banned abortion. Florida joins Georgia and South Carolina with a six-week ban. This leaves just three states in this US Census region — Delaware, Maryland and Virginia — where abortion remains legal past the first trimester and North Carolina with a 12-week limit.

“In terms of the number of people impacted, this certainly has the potential to be one of the most impactful policy changes that has happened in the recent months — and that’s not to minimize these other policy changes, which also have caused enormous amounts of harm and real barriers to access,” Isaac Maddow-Zimet, a data scientist with the Guttmacher Institute who is a lead researcher for an ongoing project tracking abortions in the US, told CNN. “It’s all so interrelated. As more and more barriers to access happen, and especially in the Southeast, and as options for care become more and more limited, it really exacerbates these obstacles even more than we would otherwise have thought.”

A 2022 study found that the average travel time to an abortion facility more than tripled in the first few months after the Dobbs decision. The effects were significantly severe in some southern states such as Texas and Louisiana, where average travel times to the nearest abortion facility were seven hours longer, adding nearly a full workday in travel time to get an abortion.

For that study, researchers considered abortion facilities in states with complete bans and those with six-week limits to be inactive. The newly implemented bans cut the number of active providers by about a tenth. In the year and a half since, the abortion landscape in the US has only become more fractured, and Florida’s new six-week ban would affect a significant number of facilities that remain in the South.

Providers and patients had 30 days to prepare since the Florida Supreme Court first posted the decision that paved the way for the new restrictions.

Amber Gavin, vice president of advocacy and operations for A Woman’s Choice, an independent abortion clinic with locations in Florida, North Carolina and Virginia, said that questions from patients started pouring in right after the April 1 ruling. Any time abortion is in the news, chaos and confusion follow, she said.

The clinic in Florida is committed to staying open and providing care as long as it can — and ensuring that’s communicated well, Gavin said. It’s also preparing for the possibility of another change come November.

Florida is one of three states, along with Maryland and New York, that has secured abortion measures on the 2024 election ballot. In Florida, the Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion would protect the right to an abortion up to the point of “viability” or to protect the patient’s health as determined by their health care provider. Ten other states are considering adding abortion-related measures, some to protect access and others that could restrict access.

“(The Florida Supreme Court decision) was a really worst-case scenario decision for us because it did overturn 40 years of precedent,” Gavin said. “But I think it also hopefully will motivate folks

and get folks out in November to make sure that the government isn't interfering in these really personal decisions.”

In the meantime, abortion funds across the US are preparing for a surge in need from patients who may be displaced by Florida's more restrictive law.

The Tampa Bay Abortion Fund anticipates that at least 90% of people who call their hotline will be impacted by a six-week abortion ban and will need to seek abortion care outside of Florida. The Chicago Abortion Fund has bolstered programs and capacity in direct anticipation of this decision from Florida's high court, and staffers estimate that they'll need an additional \$100,000 each month to absorb the surge of Floridians and other Southerners seeking support for an abortion.

“Every caller to TBAFund is already facing one or more barriers to care, such as a lack of funding, transportation, childcare, or a nearby abortion clinic in their community. The six-week ban will only exacerbate those barriers in the cruelest fashion,” Kris Lawler, president of the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund Board said in a statement.

## **Kamala Harris says another Trump term would mean ‘more suffering, less freedom’ as six-week Florida abortion ban goes into effect**

By [MJ Lee](#), [Donald Judd](#), [Ebony Davis](#) and [Michael Williams](#), CNN

6 minute read

Updated 8:32 PM EDT, Wed May 1, 2024

Vice President Kamala Harris speaks Wednesday, May 1 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in Jacksonville, Florida. Corey Perrine/Florida Times-Union/USA Today Network

**Jacksonville, Florida (CNN)** — Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Florida on Wednesday just hours after a controversial ban on most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy goes into effect in the state, as the Biden campaign ratchets up its strategy of blaming former President Donald Trump for abortion restrictions being adopted across the country.

Harris, who has been leading the charge for the Biden White House and campaign on the issue of reproductive rights, needled Trump repeatedly during her remarks at a campaign event in Jacksonville, mentioning the former president 21 times and setting into stark terms what a second

Trump administration would mean for women across the country: “More bans, more suffering, less freedom.”

“But we are not going to let that happen,” Harris said. “Because we trust women. We trust women to know what is in their own best interest. And women trust all of us to fight to protect their most fundamental freedom.”

The vice president explicitly blamed Trump for the Supreme Court’s historic overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 and for a slew of abortion bans that some states have adopted since.

It was the most times she had mentioned Trump at an event so far this year, according to a Biden campaign official.

“As of this morning, 4 million women in this state woke up with fewer reproductive freedoms than they had last night,” Harris said. “Starting this morning, women in Florida became subject to an abortion ban so extreme it applies before many women even know they are pregnant.”

“Which, by the way, tells us the extremists who wrote this ban either don’t know how a women’s body works, or they simply don’t care,” Harris added.

She also mentioned how abortion bans like the one going into effect in Florida on Wednesday threaten medical providers with criminal prosecution.

Harris also addressed Trump’s recently published comments to Time magazine, in which he did not object when asked whether he was “comfortable” with states punishing women who undergo abortions where it is banned.

“I don’t have to be comfortable or uncomfortable,” Trump said. “The states are going to make that decision. The states are going to have to be comfortable or uncomfortable, not me.”

She said in response: “So Florida, the contrast in this election could not be more clear: Basically under Donald Trump, it would be fair game for women to be monitored and punished by the government, whereas Joe Biden and I have a different view. We believe the government should never come between a woman and her doctor.”

Florida House Minority Leader Fentrice Driskell told CNN at the Jacksonville event that women in Florida woke up Wednesday morning with “fewer rights than their mothers and their grandmothers had.”

“We advocated as hard as we could against the six-week ban, because most women don’t even know that they’re pregnant,” Driskell said. “So, this is as close to an outright ban as you can get,

and it's not just that the state of Florida has fallen, this actually has broad implications for women all throughout the southeast who have come to Florida seeking abortion care."

The vice president's trek to Florida comes just one week after President Joe Biden visited Tampa – also to shine a spotlight on the state's six-week abortion ban.

During remarks to supporters Wednesday, Biden called the Florida abortion ban one of the "most extreme" in the country and squarely pinned the blame on his GOP rival.

"The most extreme abortion bans in the country, one of them," Biden said, according to the pool. "It's only one person, one person responsible for it: Donald Trump."

Biden advisers are hoping the political saliency of the reproductive rights issue can help galvanize voters ahead of Election Day and make Florida – a state that Trump won in 2016 and 2020 – more competitive. In addition to ringing the alarm bell on the six-week abortion ban, Democrats are also seizing on the fact that a constitutional amendment that would codify abortion protections in the state will be on the ballot in the fall, hoping that measure can help drive turnout.

The campaign has been keeping close tabs on Jacksonville, the fast-growing, most populous city in Florida. No Democratic presidential candidate had won Duval County – home to Jacksonville – since Jimmy Carter in 1976; Biden broke the losing streak in 2020 by defeating Trump there.

National Democrats hope that some of the key dynamics that delivered Duval County for Biden in 2020, including a boost in Black voter turnout and the rejection of Trump by suburban women, can be replicated in swing areas across the country.

"Donald Trump may think he can take Florida for granted," Harris said. "It is your power that will send Joe Biden and me back to the White House."

### **A key role for Harris**

The vice president has emerged as the Biden campaign's most prominent messenger on abortion rights since the Supreme Court's 2022 decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*. In remarks last month from Tucson, Arizona, she issued a blistering rebuke of the state's Civil War-era ban while warning a second Trump term could see a possible federal abortion ban.

"What has happened here in Arizona is a new inflection point – it has demonstrated once and for all that overturning *Roe* was ... just the opening act of a larger strategy to take women's rights and freedoms," she said at the time. "Part of a full-on attack, state by state, on reproductive freedom – and we all must understand who is to blame. Former President Donald Trump did this."

While Trump has spent the bulk of the last month in a New York courtroom over alleged hush money payments, Harris and Biden have kept a far busier campaign schedule. In April alone, the vice president made stops in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles, Nevada, Wisconsin, and Georgia – all states that may prove crucial to delivering Biden a reelection victory in November.

In a memo last month, campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez called Florida “winnable,” specifically pointing to the issue of abortion as “mobilizing a diverse and growing segment of voters to help buoy Democrats up and down the ballot.”

As the ban is set to take effect Wednesday, the national Democratic Party purchased billboards in Spanish and English tying Trump to abortion bans and targeting high-traffic areas in Gainesville, Miami, Tampa and Orlando.

The DNC on Wednesday afternoon also launched a sky banner over Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach that reads: “Trump’s Plan: Ban Abortion, Punish Women.”

Capturing the level of alarm that national Democrats are raising, Florida Democratic Party Chairwoman Nikki Fried warned Tuesday in a call with reporters that the Florida law’s implementation would mean “access to reproductive care is now effectively eliminated.”

“The Democratic Party is really energized by the fact that the attention that we are receiving from the administration, and they understand that if you want to protect democracy and freedom across the entire country, that you have to come to the belly of the beast, which is here in the state of Florida,” Fried said.

*This story has been updated with additional developments.*

*CNN’s Sam Fossum contributed to this report.*

## **The political landscape remains unsettled two years post-Roe**

By Arit John, CNN

8 minute read

Published 8:00 AM EDT, Fri June 21, 2024

Abortion rights activists Carrie McDonald, left, and Soraya Bata react to the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization ruling, which overturned the landmark abortion Roe v. Wade case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC, on June 24, 2022. Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images/File

**CNN** — Two years after the overturning of Roe v. Wade, Republicans are still grappling with the political downsides of deferring to states on abortion policy.

Across the country, the question of when, or if, patients should have access to the procedure is far from settled. The 2022 Dobbs decision has opened a new front for abortion opponents, forcing Republicans to respond to waves of new developments and boosting Democrats electoral hopes.

GOP lawmakers in red states are still pushing to restrict abortion and testing new strategies that could dominate next year's legislative season. Moments viewed as victories by abortion opponents – such as the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling on embryos or the top Arizona court's revival of an 1864 abortion ban – have sent Republicans in competitive races scrambling to distance themselves from unpopular positions, such as threats to in vitro fertilization or laws without rape and incest exceptions. (State GOP lawmakers ultimately voted to blunt or overturn those rulings.)

And two abortion cases before the US Supreme Court – a mid-June decision dismissing an effort to roll back the abortion pill mifepristone and a pending case on emergency abortions – have kept the issue in the spotlight ahead of the November election.

“The states are going to keep doing what they're going to do, and the Supreme Court is going to do whatever they're going to do,” said Mary Ziegler, a law professor and legal historian at the University of California, Davis, who supports abortion rights. “[Republicans are] going to have to respond to those developments.”

Those instances have created political fodder for Democrats, who hope anger over restrictions and enthusiasm for abortion rights ballot initiatives will help in the presidential race and tight congressional contests. Democrats have forced votes on reproductive health care bills in the US Senate and aggressively highlighted state-level restrictions and tied them back to Trump's Supreme Court picks and the overturning of Roe.

Polling has shown that abortion is still a politically potent issue for Democrats and that most Americans prefer at least some access to the procedure.

Voters also aren't sold on Trump's position, that abortion policy should be left to the states. A CNN poll released last month found that 49% of voters surveyed want to see federal abortion protections, while 37% wanted to leave the issue to the states. Just 14% supported national restrictions.

“President Trump was right to say that abortion policy should be left up to the states,” said Whit Ayres, a Republican political consultant. “The dramatic differences among state cultures means that there is no possible national policy that would be considered legitimate in both Mississippi and Massachusetts.”

Ayres said that while some states have gone “way overboard” with the abortion restrictions they’ve passed, he believes that eventually states will reach a consensus on abortion that match their culture.

The process of reaching that agreement has increased tensions between the GOP and anti-abortion groups that rejected the notion that their key issue is a political liability for Republicans. Instead, they’ve pursued their agenda at the state level and urged Trump and others to push harder at the federal level.

“While we lived under the tyranny of Roe it allowed lawmakers to sort of check the box of being pro-life, but then using the Supreme Court as the excuse for their inaction,” said Kristan Hawkins, the president of Students for Life of America. “When we took out Roe, that excuse was gone.”

## **State battles**

Since 2022, nearly two dozen states have restricted abortion to a level that wouldn’t have been legal under Roe, including 14 that have near total bans in place.

Last month, Louisiana became the first state to pass a law labeling abortion pills as controlled substances, making it a felony to possess the drugs without a prescription.

“We’ve had a lot of wins, a lot of victories, but there is a lot at stake here this election,” said Kelsey Pritchard, the director of state public affairs at Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America. “Republicans have to be as engaged and all in on this issue as Democrats are, otherwise Democrats will define the Republicans and mischaracterize their position.”

As the state legislative season draws to a close, Pritchard said her organization is now focused on political organizing. A handful of states, including battlegrounds like Nevada, Arizona and Florida, will have abortion rights measures on the November ballot or are actively seeking signatures. Democrats hope the measures will boost turnout and potentially put a state like Florida in play.

Abortion opponents are also pursuing options to limit the procedure at the federal level.

Some conservatives have argued that the Comstock Act, an 1873 anti-vice law that prohibits the mailing of materials that would induce abortion, could be used to ban the pill through the executive branch. More than 60% of abortions performed in 2023 were done via mifepristone, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights.

The Biden administration has argued the law isn't enforceable in cases where the sender isn't knowingly aiding an illegal abortion. Though the Supreme Court dismissed a case seeking to roll back access to mifepristone, the court's ruling left the door open for another challenge from states.

Trump has not said how he would treat abortion medication during a second term. During a visit to Capitol Hill earlier this month, Trump has advised Republicans to follow their hearts on the issue, but advocated for exceptions for rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother, CNN reported.

### **Court action**

Trump has also been critical of state abortion bans that restrict the procedure at six weeks, before many people know they're pregnant, or lack exceptions. Several of those bans are still being actively challenged in state courts.

State courts are hearing challenges to near total abortion bans and other restrictions in more than a dozen states, including the battlegrounds of Georgia and Wisconsin. In Nebraska and Missouri, abortion advocates are also seeking to put abortion rights measures on the November ballot.

State courts have already had an outsized impact this year, thanks in part to the slower pace of the legal system compared to the legislative cycle.

The legal challenge against Arizona's 1864 abortion ban, which prohibited the procedure at all stages of pregnancy except to save the life of the mother, dragged on for nearly two years before the state Supreme Court ruled in April that the state had to adhere to the law.

Arizona Democrats, aided by votes from Republicans facing tough reelection races and calls to overturn the ban from Trump and GOP Senate candidate Kari Lake, repealed the law in about a month.

In Texas, the state Supreme Court ruled against plaintiffs in two cases seeking clarification of the state's abortion law, which prohibits the procedure unless the pregnant person is at risk of death or the "substantial impairment of a major bodily function" without the procedure.

Amanda Zurawski, the lead plaintiff in a Texas suit of women who were denied emergency abortions in the state, has since become a surrogate for the Biden campaign. Zurawski nearly died of sepsis after she was initially denied an abortion after she suffered a preterm pre-labor rupture of membranes at 18 weeks of pregnancy. She has said her fertility was permanently damaged, and she is now using in vitro fertilization to expand her family.

“The Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade didn’t just end federal protection for abortion rights,” Zurawski said in a recent video for the Biden campaign. “It also unleashed extreme state laws that are threatening access to IVF.”

Abortion policy, and the role state courts play in interpreting those laws, has led to state Supreme Court races becoming more competitive. Less than half of states hold elections for state Supreme Court judges, but recent elections for judges in Wisconsin and Georgia have become high profiles races centered on state abortion laws.

In Texas, a former Democratic congressional candidate has launched a PAC to oust three state Supreme Court judges up for reelection this year.

“Leaving it up to the states, unfortunately, depends on the state,” said Gina Ortiz Jones, who launched the Find Out PAC in January. “In the instance of Texas, that has meant unnecessary suffering.”

### **Democrats seek to capitalize**

The Biden campaign has stuck to a consistent playbook when talking about Trump and abortion policy. It has pointed to the times the former president took credit for appointing three of the judges who overturned Roe, linked every state-level policy shift to Trump and argued that national Republicans ultimately want to push a federal ban.

“Americans across the country vividly remember where they were two years ago when Trump’s Supreme Court majority overturned Roe, sending women’s health care into chaos and putting their lives in danger,” Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said in a statement ahead of the Dobbs anniversary. “Trump did this — he owns the state of reproductive rights in our country today and if he’s reelected he will go even further.”

Ahead of the Dobbs anniversary, Senate Democrats have scheduled votes on legislation that would protect and expand access to IVF and contraceptives. Republicans who voted against the bills argued that neither treatments were at risk and the votes were politically motivated. Another Democratic bill, led by Sen. Tina Smith of Minnesota, will seek to repeal the Comstock Act.

“Republicans say they have a messaging problem on abortion,” Smith, who is also a vice chair for Democratic senators’ campaign arm, said on a press call Thursday. “No, they have a policy problem.”

## Police are questioning Florida voters about signing an abortion rights ballot petition

By Associated Press

5 minute read

Published 8:16 PM EDT, Mon September 9, 2024

An attendee wears a "Vote Yes On 4" button during the kickoff of the Harris-Walz campaign reproductive rights bus tour in Boynton Beach, Florida, US, on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024. Eva Marie Uzcategui/Bloomberg/Getty Images

**Tallahassee, Florida (AP)** — State police are showing up at Florida voters' homes to question them about signing a petition to get an abortion rights amendment on the ballot in November, and a state health care agency has launched a website targeting the ballot initiative with politically charged language.

Critics say they're the latest efforts by Florida's Republican elected officials to leverage state resources to try to block the abortion rights measure, moves which some Democratic officials argue could violate state laws against voter intimidation.

"Ron (DeSantis) has repeatedly used state power to interfere with a citizen-led process to get reproductive freedom on the ballot," Florida Democratic Party Chair Nikki Fried told reporters Monday. "This is their latest desperate attempt before Election Day."

The ballot initiative known as Amendment 4 would enshrine abortion rights in Florida law. If approved by 60% of voters, the procedure would remain legal until the fetus is viable, as determined by the patient's health care provider.

Isaac Menasche, one of nearly a million people who signed the petition to get the measure on the ballot, said a law enforcement officer knocked on his door last week in Lee County in southwest Florida to ask him about signing it.

The officer said the questioning was part of an investigation into alleged petition fraud, the Tampa Bay Times reported.

"I'm not a person who is going out there protesting for abortion," Menasche told the newspaper. "I just felt strongly, and I took the opportunity when the person asked me to say, 'Yeah, I'll sign that petition.'"

Critics say the investigation is a brazen attempt to intimidate voters in the country's third-largest state from protecting access to abortion — and the latest in a series of efforts by Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration to target Amendment 4.

"Amendment 4 was placed on the ballot by nearly one million Floridians around the state and across party lines who believe that people, not politicians, deserve the freedom to make their own health care decisions," Lauren Brenzel, the director of the Yes on 4 campaign, said in an email. "But the State will stop at nothing to keep in place their near-total abortion ban."

Florida law currently bans most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, before many women even know they are pregnant.

Speaking at a press event Monday in South Florida, DeSantis defended police visiting the homes of petition signers, and a separate move by a state health care agency to create a website targeting the ballot amendment, saying both are aimed at making sure November's vote is fair.

DeSantis signed a law in 2022 creating a state police force dedicated to investigating voter fraud and elections crimes. Voter fraud is rare, typically occurs in isolated instances and is generally detected.

He said elections police are going to the homes of people who signed the petitions that got Amendment 4 on the ballot not to intimidate them, but because questions have been raised about the legitimacy of the signatures. He said the police have found evidence that some of the supposed signatures were from dead people.

"Anyone who submitted a petition that is a valid voter, that is totally within their rights to do it," DeSantis said. "We are not investigating that. What they are investigating is fraudulent petitions. We know that this group did submit on behalf of dead people."

A deadline in state law to challenge the validity of the signatures has long passed, but county-level election administrators across Florida say they have been receiving requests from state officials to turn over verified petition signatures as part of a state probe.

Mary Jane Arrington, a Democrat who has served as the supervisor of elections in Osceola County in central Florida for 16 years, told The Associated Press she had never received a request like this one before.

Arrington said she didn't know what to make of the state's request to review signatures her office had already verified.

“These are ones that we deemed the petition valid, both in completeness and in their signature matching what we had on file for the voter,” Arrington said. “They said they were investigating ... signature petition fraud.”

The state’s elections crime unit has opened more than 40 investigations into paid petition gathers working for the Amendment 4 campaign, according to a letter that Deputy Secretary of State Brad McVay sent to the Palm Beach County supervisor of elections that was shared with the AP.

Judges have tossed out previous criminal cases brought by the controversial Office of Election Crimes and Security.

Meanwhile, a state health care agency launched a new website last week targeting Amendment 4, with a landing page proclaiming that “Florida is Protecting Life” and warning, “Don’t let the fearmongers lie to you.”

DeSantis said the page created by Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration is being paid through a budget the department has to do public service announcements. He said the page is not political but is giving Floridians “factual information” about the amendment.

“Everything that is put out is factual. It is not electioneering,” DeSantis said at the news conference, adding, “I am glad they are doing it.”

Florida is one of a number of states where measures to protect abortion access have qualified to go before voters in 2024.

Florida Republicans have been using various other strategies to thwart the state abortion ballot measure. Republican Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody attempted to use the state Supreme Court to keep abortion off the ballot. Later, abortion rights advocates criticized a financial impact statement meant to be placed on the ballot beside the proposed amendment as an attempt to mislead voters. The state Supreme Court ruled in August to allow the language to remain on the ballot.

Meanwhile, anti-abortion groups and GOP allies across the country are using an array of strategies to counter proposed ballot initiatives aiming to protect reproductive rights. These tactics have included legislative pushes for competing ballot measures that could confuse voters and monthslong delays caused by lawsuits over ballot initiative language.

Nebraskans, for example, are awaiting rulings from the state Supreme Court on three lawsuits aimed at keeping abortion off the ballot. And the Missouri Supreme Court is set to hear arguments Tuesday in an appeal of a lower court ruling that an abortion rights campaign did not meet legal requirements to qualify for the November ballot.

## **US abortion rates dipped after Florida's 6-week ban took effect, report shows**

By Deidre McPhillips, CNN

4 minute read

Published 12:01 AM EDT, Thu September 12, 2024

Monthly abortions in Florida dropped more than 30% in the months after a six-week ban took effect in the state, according to data from Guttmacher Institute. Alicia Devine/Tallahassee Democrat/USA Today Network/File

**CNN —** A six-week abortion ban in Florida led to a sharp drop in the number of abortions provided in the state and drove down national trends too, a new report shows.

Monthly abortions in Florida were cut by more than 30% after a ban on procedures after six weeks of pregnancy was implemented in May, according to the report from the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization focused on sexual and reproductive health that supports abortion rights. There were an average of about 5,400 abortions in the state each month in May and June, down from more than 8,000 a month in the first three months of the year.

Nationwide, average monthly abortions fell 7% in that time – a difference of about 7,000 fewer abortions each month – and the drop in Florida accounted for more than a third of that decline.

There are seasonal fertility patterns and some month-to-month fluctuation in abortion rates, experts say. But data from Guttmacher suggests that the changes in Florida were drastic; in other states without total abortion bans, the estimated number of abortions dipped only 2% in May and 9% in June.

The tighter restrictions in Florida were expected to reverberate through the state and the broader region. More than 1 in 10 abortions in the country happened in Florida before the more restrictive policy took effect in May, and it had become a key abortion access point for the South in the years since the US Supreme Court's Dobbs decision revoked the federal right to an abortion in 2022.

In 2023, about 9,000 people traveled from out of state to receive an abortion in Florida, according to Guttmacher estimates – many coming from states with more restrictive bans, including Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

Despite the recent declines, Guttmacher estimates show that there have been more abortions in the US the first half of 2024 than there were in the first half of 2023 – and abortions reached the highest rate in more than a decade last year.

But the abortion landscape continues to change rapidly in the US, and it's not clear what pattern will hold through the end of the year, said Isaac Maddow-Zimet, a data scientist with the Guttmacher Institute who worked on the new report.

“Many organizations, institutions and people have sprung up to really support the needs of abortion-seekers in the US,” he said. “I think that the scale of it is really clear in the ways in which abortion numbers have gone up in states without bans. There has been much more funding available and other modes of care, like telehealth, that really speaks to the ways in which people may be able to access care now in those states that may not have been able to before. At the same time, of course, access has gotten tremendously worse in banned states.”

In April, a month before the six-week ban took effect, abortions in Florida jumped more than 20% higher than the average for the first three months of the year, Guttmacher data shows.

“Providers and patients went to great lengths to provide and access care, respectively, before the law went into effect,” according to the new report.

But the influx of funding that has helped overcome new barriers to access and the longstanding barrier of cost in the wake of the Dobbs decision may not be sustainable, Maddow-Zimet said.

#### VIDEO

Florida is also one of at least 10 states where voters will have the chance to determine the future of abortion access in their state in elections this November. But ongoing changes to abortion policies in the two years since the Dobbs decision have created widespread confusion among women in the US.

“When people need abortions, it's within a very short time period. And the pace of legal change can be very slow,” Maddow-Zimet said. “Ballot measures could potentially increase access but would come too late for people who are pregnant right now.”

Lacking the federal protection of Roe v. Wade, a growing share of women are choosing to remove any chance that they could get pregnant at all.

The number of women choosing to tie or remove their fallopian tubes, a permanent form of contraception, increased after the Dobbs decision – especially in states with abortion bans and restrictions, according to [a research letter](#) published in the medical journal JAMA on Wednesday.

The researchers analyzed millions of medical records through December 2022. They found that tubal sterilization use rose nationwide immediately after the Supreme Court ruling, and it continued to increase 3% each month in states with abortion bans.

It's possible that increased use of permanent contraception could affect abortion trends, but barriers to this type of care – including medical, social and economic challenges – overlap with the barriers to abortion care, said Amanda Jean Stevenson, a demographer and assistant professor of sociology at the University of Colorado-Boulder who was not involved with the new reports.

“Being able to access wanted reproductive healthcare is subject to similar barriers across the board,” she said, particularly stigmatization and cost. “Therefore, the people who are impacted by the barriers are the same people – so the people who are able to access sterilization are probably mostly going to be people who would have been able to access abortion if they got pregnant.”

## **7 states vote to protect abortion rights, while efforts to expand access in Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota fail**

By [Amy O’Kruk](#), [Annette Choi](#), Lauren Mascarenhas, [Kaanita Iyer](#) and [Piper Hudspeth Blackburn](#), CNN

5 minute read

Updated 8:14 PM EST, Wed November 6, 2024

**CNN** — More than two years after the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and ended the federal constitutional right to an abortion, voters in 10 states cast ballots on whether to cement reproductive rights in their state constitutions.

Measures to protect abortion access will pass in Arizona and Missouri, where citizens effectively voted to overturn their state’s abortion bans. Abortion rights supporters are hopeful this will lead to a widespread increase in access to reproductive care in those states.

Similar measures will pass in Colorado, New York, Maryland, Montana and Nevada, cementing or expanding current abortion access. And measures to protect abortion failed in Florida, where the procedure is banned six weeks into pregnancy, and South Dakota, where it is banned, except to save the life of the mother.

In Nebraska, an amendment cementing the state's current 12-week abortion ban in the state constitution will pass, while a competing amendment to codify the right to an abortion will fail, CNN projects.

### **7 states passed measures protecting or expanding abortion rights, CNN projects**

Ten states had reproductive rights measures on the ballot. All aimed to protect or strengthen abortion rights, except for in Nebraska, which had dueling measures.

Since Roe was overturned in 2022, seven states had seen a popular vote on abortion rights prior to this year. Every measure aimed at protecting access passed, while all measures to restrict it failed.

#### **Nebraska**

Voters in Nebraska will approve a measure to enshrine the state's current 12-week abortion ban into the state's constitution, with exceptions for rape, incest and medical emergencies, CNN projects.

The measure was one of two abortion-related initiatives on the ballot in Nebraska. Voters are projected to reject a competing measure to enshrine the right to an abortion until viability or to protect the health of the pregnant woman in the state's constitution.

This year marked the first time in state history that two conflicting petition efforts made the same ballot. Organizers campaigned fiercely to get their respective measures on the ballot – with each side accusing the other of using misleading tactics.

#### **Missouri**

Voters in Missouri will approve a measure to enshrine the right to an abortion up to the point of viability in the state's constitution, CNN projects.

The measure will establish a right to make reproductive care decisions without government interference and protect those seeking or providing care from government discrimination.

The projected win for reproductive rights advocates will greatly expand access to abortion in the state, where the procedure is currently banned with no exceptions for rape or incest. Doctors believe fetus viability to be around 22 to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

#### **South Dakota**

Voters in South Dakota will reject a measure that would have guaranteed a constitutional right to an abortion – with regulations – during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy, CNN projects. Reproductive rights advocates were hopeful this measure would return abortion access to pregnant survivors of rape or incest, who have no abortion options under the state's current law.

#### **Nevada**

Nevada voters will approve a measure that would establish the fundamental right to an abortion up to the point of fetal viability in the state's constitution, CNN projects. To amend the constitution, however, Nevada voters will still have to approve the measure again in 2026.

## **Montana**

CNN projects that voters in Montana will approve a measure to amend the state's constitution to protect the right to make decisions about one's own pregnancy – including the right to an abortion – through fetal viability or when needed to protect the pregnant patient's life or health.

While abortion is currently legal through viability in Montana, the measure will shore up the right to the procedure in Montana by enshrining a 1999 state Supreme Court ruling. Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed a law in 2023 that specified that access to an abortion is no longer protected under the right of privacy in the state's constitution, challenging that precedent.

## **Arizona**

Arizona voters will approve a measure to enshrine the right to an abortion in the state constitution up to fetal viability, CNN projects.

The win for reproductive rights advocates will expand access to the procedure in the state, which currently bans abortion at 15 weeks into pregnancy. Doctors believe fetus viability to be around 22 to 24 weeks.

The Arizona State Supreme Court voted in April to uphold a Civil War-era total ban on abortion, sparking national outrage and prompting state lawmakers to repeal the ban before it could take effect. Abortion rights supporters said the moment served as a stark reminder of what could come if reproductive rights weren't enshrined in the state constitution.

## **Colorado**

Colorado voters will approve a measure to enshrine the right to an abortion in the state constitution, CNN projects. While abortion remains legal in the state with no gestational limit, the approval of the amendment means public funds can be used toward abortions.

That will clear the way for the state to potentially cover abortions under Medicaid and some state employee health insurance plans. Abortion rights supporters say this will go a long way toward expanding abortion access, especially among low-income individuals.

## **Maryland**

Voters in Maryland will approve a measure to enshrine reproductive protections, including the right to end a pregnancy, in the state's constitution, CNN projects. The procedure is already legal in the state with no gestational limit.

In 2023, Maryland enacted a shield law protecting its abortion providers from investigations by other states. While the state's vote will have little impact on abortion access for its own residents, proponents say it's important to solidify reproductive freedoms in a state that has become an access point for out-of-state patients.

## **New York**

CNN projects that New York voters will approve a measure that would amend the equal protection clause of the state's constitution to say that a person's rights cannot be denied due to "pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy."

The amendment survived several legal challenges to make it onto the state ballot. It seeks to provide protections against discrimination due to a number of factors, including pregnancy outcomes, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. While proponents focused on abortion rights, opponents used the measure's broad nature to raise concerns about transgender and parental issues.

## **Florida**

A Florida measure to protect the right to an abortion up to the point of viability will fail, CNN projects. Although the measure is projected to receive a majority of votes, it will not meet the 60% voter threshold needed to pass.

Both abortion rights supporters and opponents campaigned fiercely on the issue. A federal judge recently accused officials of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration of attempting to violate First Amendment rights in their campaign against the ballot measure.

The Sunshine State once served as a critical access point for patients from Southern states with more restrictive abortion policies.

*This story and headline have been updated with additional information.*

## **What the abortion measures from Election Day mean for access in the US**

By Deidre McPhillips, CNN

7 minute read

Published 9:00 AM EST, Fri November 8, 2024

People react after an abortion rights amendment to the Missouri constitution passed on November 5, 2024, at a watch party in Kansas City, Missouri. Charlie Riedel/AP

**CNN** — Despite a strong showing of support for abortion rights on Election Day, the abortion access landscape in the United States won't change immediately. And under President Donald Trump's second term, it will remain heavily fragmented — and vulnerable to future restriction.

Voters in seven states — Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada and New York — passed pro-abortion ballot initiatives at the polls this week. About a fifth of abortions in the US

– an average of about 19,000 each month – occur in those states, according to data from the Society of Family Planning.

In most of those states – Colorado, Maryland, Montana, Nevada and New York – abortion is already legal, and the ballot measures maintain access by enshrining the right to abortion in the state’s constitution.

In only two states did voters approve measures to expand abortion access: in Arizona, where there is currently a 15-week gestational limit, and in Missouri where abortion is currently banned. The measures in both states allow for the right to an abortion to be enshrined in the state constitutions up to fetal viability, which doctors say is around 22 to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Still, what these new pathways will mean in terms of practical change for women seeking an abortion remains to be seen.

A person walks past Planned Parenthood in in St. Louis, on June 24, 2022. Jeff Roberson/AP/File

### **Policy change takes time**

However, “adding constitutional protection does not automatically repeal bans or restrictions; litigation is often necessary to overturn pre-existing state laws,” according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization focused on sexual and reproductive health that supports abortion rights.

On Wednesday, Planned Parenthood’s two providers in Missouri filed a suit to restore abortion access in the state.

Still, it will take time to ramp up resources to support broader access, experts say.

“We don’t know how soon the clinics in the state will be able to expand their services, even after they receive the legal green light to extend their limits,” said Dr. Ushma Upadhyay, a professor at the University of California, San Francisco’s Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health. There were no abortion providers in Missouri even before the Dobbs decision, so a new clinic would have to be established. But greater accessibility is “likely to have important impacts,” she said.

“Currently, our best estimates are that about 13,000 people in Missouri are obtaining abortions per year – either through out-of-state travel or by ordering medications through telehealth services,” said Upadhyay, who also co-chairs #WeCount, a project from the Society of Family Planning that

tracks abortion trends in the US. “So there is certainly large amounts of unmet need for abortion care in the state of Missouri.”

The impact in Arizona may not be as large when it comes to volume, but it’s no less important, Upadhyay said. And expanding access there by scrapping the gestational limit could require time and resources to train more providers in second trimester abortions.

More than 171,000 people traveled to a different state for an abortion last year, according to Guttmacher data, and expanded access in Arizona and Missouri could help reduce barriers for women living in other states. The vast majority of abortions provided in Arizona already were provided to out-of-state patients, and Missouri borders multiple states with bans.

Supporters of Florida's Amendment 4, which would have enshrined abortion rights in the state, react after the amendment's defeat, during a watch party, in St. Petersburg, Florida, on November 5, 2024. Rebecca Blackwell/AP

### **Broad restrictions remain**

Even if the ballot measures in Arizona and Missouri improve access in those states, about 40% of women of reproductive age – more than 26 million women ages 15 to 44 – will still be living in states with abortion bans or restrictions.

And pro-abortion measures failed to pass in three other states with restrictions: South Dakota, which currently has a near-total ban; Nebraska with a 12-week gestational limit; and Florida, where tighter policies have already reverberated across the broader region and country overall.

Florida had become a key abortion access point for the South in the years since the US Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision revoked the federal right to an abortion in 2022; In 2023, more than 1 in 10 abortions in the US happened in Florida, with thousands of people traveling from other states, according to Guttmacher estimates.

But when the state’s more restrictive abortion policy took effect in May – limiting abortion after six weeks of gestation, before most women know they’re pregnant – monthly abortions in Florida were cut by more than 30% and national abortion rates dipped, too.

Advocates were hopeful that Tuesday’s ballot measure would help patch some of the gaps that 6-week ban created, but the measure fell three percentage points short of the 60% support needed to pass.

“Like so many Americans, Floridians are living under an abortion ban they didn’t ask for and don’t want. As the majority of Florida voters made clear tonight, they want their reproductive freedom back,” Nancy Northup, president and chief executive officer of the Center for Reproductive Rights, a legal advocacy group, said in a statement on Tuesday.

“But due to the high 60% threshold and the state’s disinformation campaign, they must continue to live with the fear, uncertainty, and denial of care caused by the reversal of Roe. So too will countless women in the southeastern U.S., which will remain for now a virtual abortion desert.”

Florida Physicians Against Amendment 4, a group of Ob-Gyns in Florida who opposed the ballot measure because they said it lacked “maternal health and safety regulations,” called the proposal’s defeat a “win for women.”

Now, we physicians can stay true to our Hippocratic oath to do no harm to our patients,” Dr. Christina Peña, an Ob-Gyn practicing in Miami and member of the group said in a statement. The Tampa Bay Abortion Fund, which helps cover costs for people seeking an abortion locally and those who have to travel, says that Florida’s 6-week ban has led to a rise in the number of callers requesting aid – and a 26% jump in the average amount pledged per caller.

“While we and abortion funds around the state are doing our best to fill the gaps, the need is currently outpacing our resources,” Bree Wallace, Tampa Bay Abortion Fund’s director of case management said in a statement this week. “Without financial support, people can’t afford their appointments or to travel to their appointments, forcing them to continue pregnancies they don’t want or that put them at risk.”

### **Key vulnerabilities**

It’s not clear what a new Trump administration’s strategy will be around abortion. Trump said during the campaign that he would veto a federal abortion ban if elected, but his positions on the issue have shifted many times over the years.

Despite the widespread bans and restrictions enacted by more than 20 states in the years since Dobbs, the number of abortions in the US is trending up. But a key factor driving these numbers up — the increased use of medication abortion, especially those provided through telehealth — is perhaps the most vulnerable to significant change.

More than half of all abortions in the US are medication abortions, and about 1 in 5 women who have an abortion receive their pills through the mail. This spring, about half of all telehealth abortions — or about 1 in 10 abortions overall — were provided to women living in states with abortion bans or restrictions under shield laws, #WeCount data shows. Shield laws offer some legal protections for providers who practice in some states where abortion remains legal to prescribe medication abortion drugs via telehealth to people living in states with bans or restrictions.

Medication abortion has faced heavy litigation, with the Supreme Court ruling just this June to preserve access to the abortion pill mifepristone. But there are a few ways that could change under the incoming administration.

For example, new leadership at the US Food and Drug Administration could implement regulations that restrict access to the medications. Or, the administration could enforce a particular

interpretation of the 19th century Comstock Act, which would prohibit the mailing or delivery of any abortion-related items by classifying them as obscene.

“The re-election of Donald Trump raises new and serious concerns about the safety of those needing reproductive health care. This outcome reflects a stark setback for science-based medical care in a nation where many already live in reproductive health deserts,” Dr. Daniel Grossman, an Ob-Gyn and director of the University of California, San Francisco’s Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health said in a statement.

“We’ve seen first-hand how previous Trump-era policies undermined patient care, leaving many without essential services that protect their fertility, health, and lives. We need health decisions to prioritize science and the well-being of patients, rather than political agendas, to ensure a safer future for everyone.”

**FOX NEWS**

## **These states will vote on abortion this year**

Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, states have differed in their approaches to abortion legislation.

Associated Press

Published February 7, 2024 12:33pm EST

The Florida Supreme Court is hearing arguments Wednesday on whether a ballot measure to enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution should go before voters in November.

It's one of several states where abortion might be on the ballot this year.

There has been a major push across the country to put abortion rights questions to voters since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and removed the nationwide right to abortion.

Since that 2022 decision, most Republican-controlled states have new abortion restrictions in effect, including 14 that ban it at every stage of pregnancy. Most Democrat-dominated states have laws or executive orders to protect access.

Additionally, voters in seven states — California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Ohio and Vermont — have sided with abortion rights supporters on ballot measures.

It's not clear yet how many states will vote on measures to enshrine abortion access in November. In some, the question is whether amendment supporters can get enough valid signatures. In others, it's up to the legislature. In Florida, there's legal wrangling on the details.

Paul Meacham holds up a sign that reads "Ohio is pro-life" as the crowd prays during the Ohio March for Life rally at the Ohio State House in Columbus, Ohio on Oct. 6, 2023. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

## **WHAT'S SECURELY ON 2024 BALLOTS?**

### **MARYLAND**

Maryland voters this year will also be asked whether to enshrine the right for women to end their pregnancies in the state's constitution in a ballot question put before them by lawmakers last year. The state already protects the right to abortion under state law and Democrats outnumber Republicans 2-1. Abortion is allowed in Maryland until viability.

## NEW YORK

New York lawmakers agreed to ask voters to bar discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, pregnancy outcome and reproductive healthcare as part of a broader equal protection amendment. It would also bar discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin and disability. The language of the constitutional amendment does not mention abortion specifically. Abortion is allowed in New York law until viability.

## WHERE ELSE COULD ABORTION BE ON THE BALLOT IN 2024?

### ARIZONA

A signature drive is underway to add a constitutional right to abortion in Arizona. Under the measure, the state would not be able to ban abortion until the fetus is viable, with later abortions allowed to protect a woman's physical or mental health. Supporters must gather nearly 384,000 valid signatures by July 4. Current law bans abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

### ARKANSAS

Proponents of an amendment to allow abortion in many cases have until July 5 to gather nearly 91,000 valid signatures to get it on the Nov. 5 ballot. The measure would bar laws banning abortion in the first 20 weeks of gestation and allow abortion later in pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, threats to the woman's health or life, or if the fetus would be unlikely to survive birth. Because it allows limits as soon as 20 weeks, the proposal does not have the support of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, which includes Arkansas. The state has a ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy with narrow exceptions.

### COLORADO

There are dueling efforts on abortion in Colorado. One measure would create a voter-initiated law to ban access throughout pregnancy and the other would amend the state constitution to protect it. The abortion rights amendment would also require Medicaid and private health insurance to cover abortion.

Supporters on each side have until Aug. 5 to submit more than 124,000 signatures to get a measure on the ballot. Amending the constitution in Colorado requires the support of 55% of voters. But the ban could be passed with a simple majority. Abortion is legal at all stages of pregnancy in Colorado.

### FLORIDA

Advocates collected nearly a million signatures to put a state constitutional amendment to legalize abortion until viability on the ballot, surpassing the nearly 892,000 required. State Attorney General Ashley Moody has asked the state Supreme Court to keep the measure off the ballot, saying there are differing views on the meaning of "viability" and that some key terms in the proposed measure are not properly defined.

If the measure goes before voters, 60% of them would have to vote yes for it to take effect.

Abortion is legal in Florida through the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. But a 2023 law would drop that to six weeks — often before women know they're pregnant — if the 15-week ban survives a court challenge.

## MISSOURI

Pushes are underway to get dueling abortion-related ballot measures before Missouri voters in 2024. Abortion rights advocates in Missourians for Constitutional Freedom are pushing for one that would guarantee abortion is legal until viability.

A group of moderate Republicans are taking a different approach and calling for an amendment that would allow abortion up to 12 weeks, and after that only under limited exceptions.

Abortion is currently banned at all stages of pregnancy with limited exceptions in Missouri.

## MONTANA

Abortion rights proponents have proposed a constitutional amendment in Montana that would bar the government from denying the right to abortion before viability or when it's necessary to protect the life or health of the pregnant person. But Attorney General Austin Knudsen ruled that the measure is legally insufficient. Advocates are appealing to the state's top court. If the court allows it to move ahead, supporters would need to gather more than 60,000 signatures by June 21 to get it on the ballot. Abortion is currently legal until viability in Montana.

## NEBRASKA

Advocates are trying to collect about 125,000 signatures needed by July 5 to put a constitutional amendment before voters to protect abortion rights until fetal viability. Under a law adopted last year, abortion is banned after 12 weeks, with some exceptions.

## NEVADA

Signatures are being gathered to place an abortion access amendment on Nevada's ballot in November. Under the amendment, abortion access for the first 24 weeks of pregnancy or later to protect the health of the pregnant person, which is already assured under a 1990 law, would be enshrined in the constitution. It requires more than 102,000 valid signatures by June 26 to place the measure on the ballot. Voters would need to approve it in both 2024 and 2026 to change the constitution.

The measure is one of several attempts by Nevada abortion rights groups to get a ballot question before voters in 2024 or 2026.

## SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota advocates are attempting to gather more than 17,500 signatures by May 7 to get a measure on the ballot that would loosen restrictions but does not go as far as many abortion rights advocates would like. It would ban any restrictions on abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy, allow restrictions in the second trimester with an exception for the woman's physical health and allow abortion bans in the third trimester. Planned Parenthood is not supporting the measure.

Abortion in the state is now banned at all stages of pregnancy with narrow exceptions.

#### WHICH STATES CAN BUT LIKELY WON'T PUT ABORTION ON THE BALLOT?

There are some states where the balance of power or other circumstances make abortion-related measures — most of them seeking bans or limits — unlikely to reach voters in 2024.

#### IOWA

To put a constitutional amendment on the ballot, Iowa lawmakers have to approve it in two consecutive sessions. In 2021, both chambers advanced a resolution to find there is no constitutional right to abortion in the state. Republicans control the Legislature and governor's office, but the amendment has not emerged as a priority this year and Gov. Kim Reynolds has said she'll let the issue move through the courts rather than pushing for a vote. Abortion is currently banned 20 weeks into pregnancy. A stricter ban, which would kick in when cardiac activity can be detected, around six weeks, has been adopted but put on hold by a court.

#### MAINE

Democrats are calling for a measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution. But they would not have the required two-thirds majority of lawmakers in each legislative chamber to adopt it and send it to voters without the support of several Republican lawmakers. Abortion is already allowed throughout pregnancy.

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania has a similar process as Iowa with a similar amendment to find no constitutional right to abortion up for consideration. Lawmakers passed it in 2022. But Democrats have since taken control of the state House, making it unlikely to pass, which is required before it can go to a statewide referendum. Abortion is now legal in Pennsylvania for up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

#### WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Assembly in January approved calling for a binding statewide referendum for a law to ban abortions after 14 weeks of pregnancy. Even if the state Senate approves, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers has promised to veto it. Abortion is legal within the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.

## **Pro-life advocates sound alarm on 'extreme' Florida abortion vote that Dems hope could swing general election**

Florida voters will decide in November if abortion is protected by the state's constitution

By Andrew Mark Miller Fox News

Published April 3, 2024 4:00am EDT

FIRST ON FOX: The Florida Supreme Court ruled on Monday that a ballot measure enshrining abortion into the state's constitution can be voted on in November which prominent pro-life advocates tell Fox News Digital will involve a "misleading" playbook that is too "extreme" for Florida voters.

While Monday's ruling upheld a 15-week abortion ban signed into law by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and cleared the way for the imminent enforcement of a 6-week ban, which Democrats have already attacked as "MAGA extremism", it also approved a ballot measure in November allowing Florida voters to decide whether to enshrine abortion access into the state constitution.

The Florida ruling comes shortly after voters in Ohio, where Trump won by 8 points in 2020, overwhelmingly voted in favor of a constitutional amendment allowing abortion. Several pro-life advocates spoke to Fox News Digital about what the post-Roe v. Wade battle will look like in Florida.

"The abortion businesses pushing this extreme amendment know the heartbeat law is supported by the majority of Floridians and second- and third-trimester abortion is wildly unpopular," Katie Glenn Daniel, Tampa lawyer and SBA Pro-Life America State Policy Director, told Fox News Digital.

A group of anti-abortion protesters crashes the Women's March Action Rally for Reproductive Rights at Mariachi Plaza in Los Angeles, California, on Oct. 8, 2022. ( DAVID MCNEW / AFP via Getty Images)

"That's why they will use tens of millions of dollars like they did in Ohio to use fear and deception because they know their extreme policy is wildly unpopular. Despite the clear fact that emergency care continues to be available to pregnant women in all 50 states, they will rely on the lie women won't receive medical care and sow confusion that puts women's lives in danger."

Daniel explained that in order to avoid a similar result as Ohio, prominent Floridians must persuasively articulate what the abortion measure means for residents.

"Gov. Ron DeSantis must be at the forefront of protecting Florida from Big Abortion's attempt to eliminate the rights of unborn children, parents, women, and girls," Daniel said. "Gov. DeSantis signed protections for babies who feel pain and have a heartbeat into law and now he must lead in defending those protections."

Since Roe v. Wade was overturned and the issue was given back to the states, Republicans have suffered several defeats at the ballot box that many pundits attribute to poor messaging on abortion from the GOP but some pro-life advocates, including Caitlin Connors, southern regional director for SBA Pro-Life America, have made the case that Democrats are not where the majority of Americans are on abortion.

"The media narrative that late-term abortion is a political winner is wrong. Since Dobbs we've seen strong pro-life candidates like Senator Rubio stand strong for life and win," Connors told Fox News Digital.

"The Democrats know their candidates suffer when they get on a debate stage and are confronted directly on the extreme position to legalize 2nd and 3rd trimester abortions, so they are trying to use deceptive amendments to cover their tracks. Their extreme position is not a winner with the American people and Republicans must continue to expose the Democrat position for voters across America."

Prominent Democrats have already begun promoting the idea that a wave of turnout for the abortion measure will not only constitutionally override the state's current abortion bans but could also benefit President Biden's effort to carry Florida in November which would be a crushing blow to former President Trump's campaign.

"More and more people are realizing how wrong these bans are and you've seen it across the country, whenever there have been ballot initiatives, no matter how red the state is, the people rise up for women's reproductive freedom here," North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper told reporters during a Biden-Harris campaign conference call on Wednesday.

An activist seen holding a placard that says protect safe, legal abortion during the protest. ((Photo by Megan Jelinger/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images))

"So the more Republicans do here, the worse it's going to get for them at the ballot box, as it should, because this is an issue that people care about all across the country."

"I think the empirical evidence suggests that we have a good shot for this," Florida Democratic State Rep. Fentrice Driskell said on the call. "And it's tough to ignore the electoral implications. The last time that a Democratic presidential candidate won Florida was when there was an anti-abortion measure on the ballot. So this is something that Floridians pay attention to. That was President Barack Obama in 2012. So I am optimistic that it will pass the finish line in November."

Republicans outnumber Democrats in Florida by a wide margin and a recent Politico analysis suggested that recent abortion ballot measures did not significantly boost Democrat turnout. Still, Biden campaign manager Julie Chávez Rodríguez said on the zoom call, "We definitely see Florida in play."

After the Ohio defeat, pro-life groups assessed that part of the reason for the result was being massively outspent and pointed to what they said was misleading language in the abortion amendment, two things that they say must be addressed in Florida.

"Our campaign will ensure that Florida voters won't be fooled by the misleading amendment language and ensure that the abortion industry and out of state abortion extremists who have spent nearly \$20 million on their campaign so far won't succeed in their efforts to enact one of the most extreme abortion amendment proposals in America," Sara Johnson, grassroots director of Florida Voters Against Extremism, told Fox News Digital.

"No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider," the ballot measure, known as Amendment 4, states. "This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion."

Florida Republican Attorney General Ashley Moody, in an amicus brief that was denied by the court, argued the wording is misleading for several reasons including not defining the term "viability."

"The ballot summary here is part of a ... design to lay ticking time bombs that will enable abortion proponents later to argue that the amendment has a much broader meaning than voters would ever have thought," Moody argued in a previous brief.

"The ballot language incorrectly implies that the amendment will not impact parental rights when their children seek abortions. Currently, Florida requires parental consent, with limited exceptions, before a physician can perform an abortion on a minor," SBA Pro-Life America argued in a brief.

"If the proposed amendment passes, this statute will likely be another casualty. The loss of parental consent is obscured in the ballot language, which highlights that the proposed amendment will not change the constitutional right to parental notification, leading voters to assume that the right to parental consent will be similarly untouched."

Abortion rights advocates gather in front of the J Marvin Jones Federal Building and Courthouse in Amarillo, Texas (MOISES AVILA/AFP via Getty Images)

"Not only will this measure bring dangerous late-term abortions back to Florida, but it will allow girls who aren't old enough to get their ears pierced on their own get an abortion without a parent's okay," SBA added in a press release.

"Those girls and the women who have abortions will be put at risk when this measure eliminates every abortion health regulation on the books. In a state where 25% of abortion centers failed inspections it's no surprise they want to be completely unregulated to increase their profits at the expense of women, girls, and babies."

Stephen Billy, VP of State Affairs for SBA Pro-Life America, told Fox News Digital that major pro-abortion groups will be pumping money into the state.

"Planned parenthood and other abortion businesses, with support from the ACLU, are the major backers of this initiative," Billy said. "And with good reason—they stand to benefit most if Florida becomes a late-term abortion destination and the state cannot enforce basic health and safety guidelines or even inspect their facilities. One thing is certain, their message won't explain how extreme this amendment is and won't focus on the ACLU's new lawsuit in Ohio where they're challenging whether an informed consent law allowed under Roe is permitted after the amendment."

Pro-abortion groups have pointed out that abortion restrictions have been implemented across the entire deep south since Roe's reversal and suggested the Florida vote will be a rallying cry against those nationwide efforts.

Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, said in a statement her organization had seen the negative impact from abortion bans on patients in Florida. "Today's decision paves the way for Florida voters to stop these ridiculous abortion bans once and for all," she said.

Constitutional amendments in Florida must pass with at least 60% of the vote, a larger percentage of the vote than any statewide abortion measure has yet won.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ((Photo by SERGIO FLORES/AFP via Getty Images))

"With abortion on the ballot, Republicans in Florida have the opportunity to be resoundingly clear on where they stand on the issue of abortion and the value of all life," Florida GOP State Sen. Erin Grall told Fox News Digital.

"As an issue where lives all across Florida will be deeply and dramatically affected if this were to pass, I know Republicans will be emphasizing their support of pro-life protections and communicating on this important issue with compassion, which is in contrast with the deeply unpopular Democrat agenda for unlimited abortion in Florida."

Reuters contributed to this report

**Which states could have abortion on the ballot in 2024?**

Since 2022, 14 states have banned abortion at every stage of pregnancy.

Associated Press

Published May 2, 2024 9:00pm EDT

- **Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, most Republican-controlled states have implemented new abortion restrictions, and 14 ban it at every stage of pregnancy.**
- **Voters in 7 states have sided with abortion rights supporters on ballot measures.**
- **It is not yet clear how many states will vote in November on measures to preserve abortion access.**

South Dakota advocates submitted petitions Wednesday in their effort to amend the state constitution to include the right to abortion, at least under some circumstances.

Signatures are also expected to be turned in Friday in Missouri for a ballot measure there.

The efforts in both states are part of a movement to put abortion rights questions to voters since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and removed the nationwide right to abortion.

Since that 2022 decision, most Republican-controlled states have new abortion restrictions in effect, including 14 that ban it at every stage of pregnancy. Most Democrat-dominated states have laws or executive orders to protect access.

Additionally, voters in seven states — California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Ohio and Vermont — have sided with abortion rights supporters on ballot measures.

It's not clear yet how many states will vote on measures to enshrine abortion access in November. In some, the question is whether amendment supporters can get enough valid signatures. In others, it's up to the legislature. And there's legal wrangling in the process in some states.

Some of the efforts have already failed to reach ballots. Wisconsin's legislative session ended without a state Senate vote on a measure that the House approved to ask voters to ban abortion after 14 weeks. Iowa lawmakers did not approve a measure before their session ended this year to ask voters to find that there's no constitutional right to abortion; Pennsylvania lawmakers previously pursued a similar amendment, but it's not expected to be added to the ballot there this year. A Louisiana measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution died in committee and one in Maine effectively died when it fell short of receiving the approval of two-thirds of the House.

Protesters shout as they join thousands marching around the Arizona Capitol after the Supreme Court decision to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade abortion decision Friday, June 24, 2022, in Phoenix. (AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin)

## WHAT'S SECURELY ON 2024 BALLOTS?

### FLORIDA

The state Supreme Court ruled on April 1 that a ballot measure to legalize abortion until viability could go on the ballot despite a legal challenge from state Attorney General Ashley Moody, who argued that there are differing views on the meaning of "viability" and that some key terms in the proposed measure are not properly defined.

Advocates collected nearly a million signatures to put a state constitutional amendment to legalize abortion until viability on the ballot, surpassing the nearly 892,000 required.

Sixty percent of voters would have to agree for it to take effect.

Abortion is illegal in Florida after the first six weeks of pregnancy under a law that took effect May 1.

### MARYLAND

Maryland voters this year will also be asked whether to enshrine the right for women to end their pregnancies in the state's constitution in a ballot question put before them by lawmakers last year. The state already protects the right to abortion under state law and Democrats outnumber Republicans 2-1. Abortion is allowed in Maryland until viability.

### NEW YORK

New York lawmakers agreed to ask voters to bar discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, pregnancy outcome and reproductive healthcare as part of a broader equal protection amendment. It would also bar discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin and disability. The language of the constitutional amendment does not mention abortion specifically. Abortion is allowed in New York law until viability.

## WHERE ELSE COULD ABORTION BE ON THE BALLOT IN 2024?

### ARIZONA

A signature drive is underway to add a constitutional right to abortion in Arizona. Under the measure, the state would not be able to ban abortion until the fetus is viable, with later abortions allowed to protect a woman's physical or mental health. Supporters must gather nearly 384,000 valid signatures by July 4.

Abortion is currently legal for the first 15 weeks of pregnancy in Arizona. An Arizona Supreme Court ruling in April said enforcement could begin soon for a near-total ban that was already on

the books. But on Thursday, the governor signed a bill repealing that law, which is still expected to be in effect for a time.

## ARKANSAS

Proponents of an amendment to allow abortion in many cases have until July 5 to gather nearly 91,000 valid signatures to get it on the Nov. 5 ballot. The measure would bar laws banning abortion in the first 20 weeks of gestation and allow abortion later in pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, threats to the woman's health or life, or if the fetus would be unlikely to survive birth. Because it allows limits as soon as 20 weeks, the proposal does not have the support of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, which includes Arkansas. The state has a ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy with narrow exceptions.

## COLORADO

Advocates for a ballot measure to add constitutional protections for abortion, including requiring Medicaid and private health insurers to cover it, have turned in signatures to have it placed on the ballot. The secretary of state's office has until May 17 to determine whether there are enough valid signatures. More than 124,000 are required.

Amending the state constitution requires support of 55% of voters.

Those backing a dueling measure — a law to ban abortion — did not turn in signatures, and the measure will not go before voters.

Abortion is legal at all stages of pregnancy in Colorado.

## MISSOURI

Missouri advocates for abortion access are expected to turn in signatures on Friday, two days ahead of their deadline to submit more than 171,000 to ask voters to approve a constitutional amendment to guarantee abortion until viability.

A group of moderate Republicans have abandoned for this year efforts for an alternate amendment that would have allowed abortion up to 12 weeks and after that with only limited exceptions.

Abortion is currently banned in Missouri at all stages of pregnancy with limited exceptions.

## MONTANA

Abortion rights proponents in Montana have proposed a constitutional amendment that would bar the government from denying the right to abortion before viability or when it's necessary to protect the life or health of the pregnant person. After a legal battle over the ballot language, the Montana Supreme Court on April 1 wrote its version of the language that would appear on the ballot if supporters gather more than 60,000 signatures by June 21. Abortion is legal until viability in Montana under a 1999 Montana Supreme Court opinion.

## NEBRASKA

Advocates are trying to collect about 125,000 signatures needed by July 5 to put a constitutional amendment before voters to protect abortion rights until fetal viability. A competing petition effort would add a constitutional amendment that mirrors a law adopted last year that bans abortion after 12 weeks, with some exceptions.

## NEVADA

Signatures are being gathered to place an abortion access amendment on Nevada's ballot in November. Under the amendment, abortion access for the first 24 weeks of pregnancy or later to protect the health of the pregnant person, which is already assured under a 1990 law, would be enshrined in the constitution. It requires more than 102,000 valid signatures by June 26 to place the measure on the ballot. Voters would need to approve it in both 2024 and 2026 to change the constitution.

The measure is one of several attempts by Nevada abortion rights groups to get a ballot question before voters in 2024 or 2026.

## SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota advocates said they submitted more than 55,000 signatures — 20,000 more than required — to get a measure on the ballot that would loosen restrictions but does not go as far as many abortion rights advocates would like. It would ban any restrictions on abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy. It would allow the state in the second trimester to "regulate the pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman." An abortion ban would be allowed in the third trimester, as long as it included exceptions for the life and health of the woman. Planned Parenthood is not supporting the measure.

Abortion in the state is now banned at all stages of pregnancy with narrow exceptions.

## **Trump's Florida allies oppose abortion amendment as former president decides how to vote**

Florida is considering an amendment to enshrine the right to an abortion into its constitution.

By [Julia Johnson](#) Fox News

Published August 30, 2024 3:00pm EDT

Allies of former President Trump in Florida are explaining which way they will vote on an abortion ballot question in the state's November election after the Trump campaign's clarification that he has yet to decide his position.

A ballot initiative in Florida to amend the state constitution to enshrine the right to an abortion into law is known as Amendment 4. It states, "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider."

Additionally, it says, "This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion."

Trump allies, including Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., left, and Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., revealed where they stand on the Florida abortion amendment. (Reuters)

Trump, a resident of Florida, was asked Thursday how he would vote by a reporter. "I am going to be voting that we need more than six weeks," he said in response.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America (SBA), promptly responded with a statement, saying, "President Trump has consistently opposed abortions after five months of pregnancy. Amendment 4 would allow abortion past this point. Voting for Amendment 4 completely undermines his position."

"We strongly support Florida's current heartbeat law," she added. "For anyone who believes in drawing a different line, they still must vote against Amendment 4, unless they don't want a line at all. Amendment 4 would lock unlimited abortion into the state constitution, preventing the Florida legislature from enacting any changes."

Former President Trump said six weeks was not enough time. (Ian Maule/Getty Images)

Afterward, SBA corrected the statement to add that Dannenfelser spoke with Trump on Thursday night.

"He has not committed to how he will vote on Amendment 4," she said.

Trump's campaign also issued a statement after his remark.

"President Trump has not yet said how he will vote on the ballot initiative in Florida. He simply reiterated that he believes six weeks is too short," spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said.

Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio's office told Fox News Digital he will be voting against the amendment, which would enshrine abortion rights into the state constitution. A spokesperson referred Fox News Digital to an April interview when the senator explained his stance.

Advocates want to enshrine the right to an abortion into the Florida constitution. (Anna Rose Layden/Getty Images)

"My fundamental challenge, and that's at the core of it, is I believe that the right from which all of the rights emanate is the right to live, the right of a human being to live. And that right to live when it comes to abortion is in conflict with a woman's right to choose. And, so, we have to choose in public policy, what do we prioritize? The right to live or the right to choose in those circumstances. And it's a tough choice for a lot of people, and I understand it. But, for me, I'm going to be on the side of life," Rubio said at the time.

Another Trump ally, Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., told Fox News Digital in a statement, "I do not believe abortion policy belongs in the constitution. This matter should be addressed by the state legislature."

Representatives for Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., and Reps. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., and Byron Donalds, R-Fla., did not provide comment in time for publication when asked by Fox News Digital how they plan to vote.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has come out against the amendment. (Cheney Orr/AFP via Getty Images)

Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis' office did not provide comment but referred Fox News Digital to an outside campaign against the amendment, which is run by allies of the governor. Taryn Fenske, a representative for the Vote No On 4 Florida campaign, pointed Fox News Digital to her post on X in response to Trump.

"Donald Trump has consistently stated that late-term abortions where a baby can feel pain should never be permitted, and he's always stood up for parents' rights," she wrote. "Amendment 4 would allow late-term abortions, eliminate parental consent, and open the door to taxpayer-funded abortions. It's extreme and must be defeated."

DeSantis has publicly opposed the amendment in the past.

Opponents of the amendment have pointed to its vague language as an issue, noting it could be read to allow elective abortion throughout a woman's pregnancy as deemed necessary by employees of abortion clinics, rather than solely doctors. The amendment also does not define viability, typically understood to be around 20-25 weeks, leaving more gray area to be interpreted.

Another concern brought by the amendment is its language regarding minors getting abortions. The text says that the amendment would not change the legislature's ability to require parents to be notified about a minor's abortion. However, it leaves out the legislature's authority to require parental consent for such a procedure. The amendment is understood by critics to overturn current parental consent laws.

The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

Julia Johnson is a politics writer for Fox News Digital and Fox Business, leading coverage of the U.S. Senate. She was previously a politics reporter at the Washington Examiner.

Follow Julia's reporting on X at [@JuliaaJohnson](https://twitter.com/JuliaaJohnson) and send tips to [Julia.Johnson@fox.com](mailto:Julia.Johnson@fox.com).

## **Trump opposes Florida's Amendment 4, which offers unfettered abortion access: 'It's radical'**

Donald Trump said of pro-abortion Amendment 4 to Fox News that 'I'll be voting no'.

By [Jasmine Baehr](#), [Bryan Llenas](#) Fox News

Published August 30, 2024 9:43pm EDT

Former President Trump called Florida's proposed amendment to allow for unfettered abortion access across all nine months as "radical" in an exclusive interview with Fox News on Friday.

Amendment 4, up for vote in the Sunshine State, would end Florida's 6-week abortion ban by enshrining abortion in the state's constitution.

"No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider," reads the ballot initiative.

"You need more time than six weeks. I've disagreed with that right from the early primaries. When I heard about it, I disagreed with it. At the same time, the Democrats are radical because the nine months is just a ridiculous situation," said Trump.

"That way you can do an abortion in the ninth month. And, you know, some of the states, like Minnesota and other states have it where you can actually execute the baby after birth and all of that stuff is unacceptable. So I'll be voting no for that reason," the former president asserted.

Republican presidential nominee, former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in the 1st Summit Arena at the Cambria County War Memorial on August 30, 2024, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Promising to cut energy bills in half, conduct the largest deportation operation in history and put a 200% tariff on foreign-made automobiles, Trump rallied his supporters in the all-important battleground state of Pennsylvania. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law in 2023 the Heartbeat Protection Act, which makes abortion after six weeks illegal in Florida.

"...Doing an abortion in the ninth month is unacceptable to anybody. And I think that, we're going to have to do something about that. There's some there's something in between, but the six is too short. It's just too short a period. And the nine months is unacceptable," Trump said today before a campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

Trump previously caused confusion over where he stood on the proposed amendment, as his pro-life stance on the campaign trail has not been absolute.

"I will say this: You have to win elections," Trump shared in a Fox News town hall earlier this year. "Otherwise, you're going to be back where you were, and you can't let that ever happen again. You've got to win elections."

Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally at 1st Summit Arena at the Cambria County War Memorial, in Johnstown, Pa., Friday, Aug. 30, 2024. (AP Photo/Rebecca Droke)

The former president also takes credit for the overturning of Roe v. Wade in June 2022.

"Today's decision, which is the biggest WIN for LIFE in a generation, along with other decisions that have been announced recently, were only made possible because I delivered everything as promised, including nominating and getting three highly respected and strong Constitutionalists confirmed to the United States Supreme Court," said Trump in 2022.

Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump arrives at a campaign rally at 1st Summit Arena at the Cambria County War Memorial, in Johnstown, Pa., Friday, Aug. 30, 2024. (AP Photo/Rebecca Droke)

Trump once called himself "the most pro-life president" in American history at the Faith & Freedom Coalition Gala in 2023.

Amendment 4 is sponsored by a group in Florida called "Floridians Protecting Freedom" based in Sarasota. According to the Florida Department of Elections, the amendment has more than the 8% of statewide registered voter-required signatures to make the ballot at 997,035.

The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

Jasmine is a writer at Fox News Digital and a military spouse based in New Orleans. Stories can be sent to [jasmine.baehr@fox.com](mailto:jasmine.baehr@fox.com)

**Trump says he'll vote to uphold Florida abortion ban after seeming to signal he'd support repeal**

By Michelle Price Published August 30, 2024 11:14pm EDT [2024 Election](#) [Associated Press](#)

NEW YORK (AP) - Former President Donald Trump on Friday said he would vote no on a Florida ballot measure that would repeal the state's six-week abortion ban, a day after he seemed to indicate he would vote in favor of the measure.

Trump has said he thinks Florida's ban is a mistake and said in an interview with Fox News Channel on Friday, "I think six weeks, you need more time." But then he said, "at the same time, the Democrats are radical," and he repeated false claims he has frequently made about late-term abortions and said that he opposed allowing abortions up until nine months.

"So I'll be voting no for that reason," said Trump, who was registered to vote at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida.

The Florida ballot measure would legalize abortion until fetal viability, a term used by healthcare providers to describe whether a pregnancy is expected to continue developing normally or whether a fetus might survive outside the uterus. It's generally considered to be around 23 or 24 weeks, which is about six months.

Trump drew backlash from abortion opponents who support him when he seemed to signal in another interview on Thursday that he would vote in favor of the ballot measure and repeal the six week ban when he said, "I am going to be voting that we need more than six weeks."

Amid the blowback his campaign quickly issued a statement saying that Trump had not actually said how he would vote but "simply reiterated that he believes six weeks is too short."

Trump has held multiple conflicting positions on abortion over the years. After briefly considering backing a potential 15-week ban on the procedure nationwide, he announced in April that regulating abortion should be left to the states.

In the months since, he has repeatedly taken credit for his role in overturning Roe and called it "a beautiful thing to watch" as states set their own restrictions.

"Donald Trump just made his position on abortion very clear: He will vote to uphold an abortion ban so extreme it applies before many women even know they are pregnant," Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic rival, said in a statement responding to Trump's Friday comments.

The Source:

This article is based on a report from the Associated Press, including statements from Former President Donald Trump. This story was reported from New York.

### **DeSantis campaigns against high-stakes abortion measure on Florida ballot: 'Bait and switch' legislation**

Governor says Amendment 4 would hurt parental rights in the state.

By [Sarah Rumpf-Whitten](#) [Fox News](#)

Published October 22, 2024 7:45pm EDT

WINTER GARDEN, Fla. — [Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis](#) lashed in on the high-stakes abortion amendment on the ballot for voters in the Sunshine State, calling the measure a "bait and switch."

Amendment 4, which would end Florida's six-week [abortion ban](#) by enshrining abortion in the state's constitution, has been a pressure-point as Election Day nears.

On Tuesday, DeSantis held a press conference at the Grove Bible Chapel in Winter Garden, called "Doctors Against Amendment 4," to urge voters to vote "No" on the abortion amendment. The governor was joined by nearly a dozen doctors against the amendment.

"When people actually peel back the onion and see what this amendment is, they don't like it," he said. "And it loses a lot of support."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis spoke about Amendment 4 at the Grove Bible Chapel in Winter Garden, FL on Oct. 22, 2024. (WOFL)

DeSantis put the amendment on blast, condemning the legislation's "vague language," noting it could be read to allow elective abortion throughout a woman's pregnancy as deemed necessary by employees of abortion clinics, rather than solely doctors.

"It's interesting because it's written with no definitions," he said. "It's intentionally vague and deceptive... All they're doing is lying about Florida policies and laws about respecting life, both the life of the mother and the health of the mother, of course, but also the life of the child."

The amendment also does not define viability, typically understood to be around 20 to 25 weeks, DeSantis said.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis urges voters to vote "No" on Amendment 4. He said that the language in the amendment was "vague" and affects parental rights. (WOFL)

DeSantis also said that the amendment does not define "health care provider."

"[Amendment 4] It says that an abortion can be greenlit all the way to the moment of birth by a 'health care provider'," he said. "That's the term that they used. Well, a health care provider is not the same as a licensed physician."

"Florida law has always required that licensed physicians be the ones to be involved in performing these procedures. Some of them are very, very high risk. Sometimes there are a lot of complications that can happen," he said. "So you will have nonmedical doctors doing this."

"I don't know that there's any other state that has ever gone down that road."

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis attends the drivers meeting prior to the NASCAR Cup Series Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on February 19, 2024 in Daytona Beach, Florida. ((Photo by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images))

DeSantis said that another concern brought by the amendment is its language regarding minors getting abortions.

The text says that the amendment would not change the legislature's ability to require parents to be notified about a minor's abortion. However, it leaves out the legislature's authority to require parental consent for such a procedure.

DeSantis has criticized the proposed amendment as a "bait and switch" when it comes to parental rights.

"This amendment, if adopted, would be the first amendment in the history of the state of Florida to actually repeal a right. It will repeal the right of a parent to have to provide consent before their child undergoes an abortion," he said. "Right now in Florida, we have parental consent, not just for abortion, but for anything involving medical treatment for a minor. They can't give your kid an aspirin unless you consent."

Pro-abortion rights activists in Florida participate conduct a rally to protect abortion rights for Floridians. (Chandan Khanna / AFP)

"And that's the way it should be for parents. And yet, this amendment would permanently take this one issue and say the parents do not have the right to be in that decision-making process or to provide consent."

DeSantis pointed to the difference between parental notification and parental consent.

"What this amendment does, it gives a little bait and switch. The legislature says it requires parental notification, but that's not the same as consent," he said. "Notification can be sent via a postcard."

"The parent knows this is happening, but the parent can't stop it," DeSantis said. "The parent doesn't have the authorization and is not required to provide authorization. So it is repealing the right of a parent to provide consent for the minor."

### **Abortion and the 2024 election**

Florida is one of the nine states with a measure on the Nov. 5 ballot to protect access to abortion. In Florida, the hot-button issue has been the most expensive – with about \$150 million in ads, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact.

The amendment's language states, "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider."

Trump and Harris campaign separately in Pennsylvania. (Getty Images)

### **Trump**

Former President Trump has shifted his stance on abortion during the election cycle, with the Republican nominee hoping to attract independents and some disillusioned Democrats, but running the risk of alienating his pro-life base.

Trump has countered Democratic attacks on the former president's abortion stance by stating he would leave abortion access to the states, as determined by the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Trump notably opposes a federal abortion ban, but has remained opposed to late-term abortions. In July, the Republican Party abandoned its long-standing position of advocating for abortions.

## **Harris**

Throughout Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign, she has argued that Trump — who nominated three conservative justices to the Supreme Court who later voted to overturn Roe v. Wade — is responsible for worsening medical care for women and that he would seek further restrictions.

Harris has cast her position on the topic as creating legislation to restore the national abortion right that was eliminated following Roe v. Wade.

She has also vowed to protect access to the abortion drug mifepristone, calling the drug "essential medication."

Sarah Rumpf-Whitten is a U.S. Writer at Fox News Digital.

Sarah joined FOX in 2021, where she has assisted on coverage of breaking and major news events across the US and around the world, including the fallout following the "Defund the police" movement, the assassination attempts on President Donald Trump's life and illegal immigration.

She has experience reporting on topics including crime, politics, business, lifestyle, world news and more. You can follow her on Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Florida's progressive abortion amendment fails following DeSantis push against 'bait and switch' legislation**

A high-stakes abortion amendment in Florida has failed.

By Sarah Rumpf-Whitten Fox News

Published November 5, 2024 10:20pm EST

Abortion on the ballot has been seen as a sticking point for Republicans since the overturning of Roe V Wade, but a major amendment in Florida failed after voters voted "No" on the progressive legislation.

The measure needed a 60 percent supermajority to pass, the highest threshold in the country. It failed after 43% voted "No" and 57% voted "Yes."

Florida's abortion ban has been a contentious topic in the once-swing-state, with proponents of the amendment arguing that the Sunshine State's current 6-week abortion ban is too restrictive after it was implemented in May.

The amendment's language states, "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider."

Pro-abortion rights activists participate in the "Rally for Our Freedom" to protect abortion rights for Floridians, in Orlando, Florida. (Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty) (CHANDAN KHANNA / AFP)

DeSantis used his platform as governor to lead the charge against the high-stakes amendment on the ballot, calling the measure a "bait and switch."

"This amendment, if adopted, would be the first amendment in the history of the state of Florida to actually repeal a right," the Republican governor said during a "Doctors Against Amendment 4" stop in October.

"It will repeal the right of a parent to have to provide consent before their child undergoes an abortion," he said. "Right now in Florida, we have parental consent, not just for abortion, but for anything involving medical treatment for a minor. They can't give your kid an aspirin unless you consent."

Voters work on their ballots at a polling place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024, in Simi Valley, Calif. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

Florida is one of the nine states with a measure on the Nov. 5 ballot to protect access to abortion. While Florida needed at least 60% endorsement of the initiative, all other states need a simple majority to pass.

The majority of these ballot measures seek to amend efforts passed in Republican-led states, whose leaders moved to restrict abortion in the wake of the Supreme Court's June 2022 decision on Roe.

In Florida, the hot-button issue has been the most expensive – with about \$150 million in ads, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact.

Voters fill out their ballots on Election Day in Columbus, Ohio on November 7, 2023. Residents of Ohio voted on November 7, 2023, to enshrine the right to an abortion in the Republican-run US state's constitution, US media projected, in what could be a bellwether for an issue which is likely to dominate next year's presidential race. (Getty Images)

Nearly two years after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, a record number of voters think abortion should be legal, with two-thirds favoring a nationwide law guaranteeing access, according to a Fox News national survey conducted in March 22-25, 2024.

Fifty-nine percent think abortion should be legal in all or most cases, up from the previous high of 57% in September 2022 and a record low of 44% in April 2022.

Overall, just 7% think abortion should never be permitted, while five times as many say it always should be (35%). Another one-third (32%) say abortion should be illegal except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

Democratic presidential nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican presidential nominee and former President Donald Trump are seen in a combination of file photographs taken in Chandler, Arizona, Oct. 10, 2024, and in Evans, Georgia, Oct. 4, 2024. (REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein and Octavio Jones/File Photo)

## **Trump**

Former President Trump has shifted his stance on abortion during the election cycle, with the Republican nominee hoping to attract independents and some disillusioned Democrats, but running the risk of alienating his pro-life base.

Trump has countered Democratic attacks on the former president's abortion stance by stating he would leave abortion access to the states, as determined by the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Trump notably opposes a federal abortion ban, but has remained opposed to late-term abortions. In July, the Republican Party abandoned its long-standing position of advocating for abortions.

## **Harris**

Throughout Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign, she has argued that Trump — who nominated three conservative justices to the Supreme Court who later voted to overturn Roe v. Wade — is responsible for worsening medical care for women and that he would seek further restrictions.

Harris has cast her position on the topic as creating legislation to restore the national abortion right that was eliminated following Roe v. Wade.

She has also vowed to protect access to the abortion drug mifepristone, calling the drug "essential medication."

Fox News Digital has reached out to the DeSantis team for comment.

*Fox News' Victoria Balara contributed to this report.*

Sarah Rumpf-Whitten is a U.S. Writer at Fox News Digital.

Sarah joined FOX in 2021, where she has assisted on coverage of breaking and major news events across the US and around the world, including the fallout following the "Defund the police" movement, the assassination attempts on President Donald Trump's life and illegal immigration.

She has experience reporting on topics including crime, politics, business, lifestyle, world news and more. You can follow her on Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Abortion 'on the ballot' in 10 states this election, but it might not matter ( 5<sup>th</sup> of November)**

Harris has made abortion access a centerpiece of her campaign.

By Breanne Deppisch Fox News

Published November 5, 2024 7:00am EST

Voters in 10 U.S. states will decide on major ballot initiatives this year that either expand or restrict abortion access for women, a highly polarizing issue but one that some advocacy groups do not believe will affect turnout quite as much as some had expected.

It's unclear to what extent this could impact Vice President Harris, who has focused heavily on abortion access and reproductive rights in her bid for the presidency.

In the final race to Election Day, some doubt the issue has lasting power to turn out voters to the same degree it did during the 2022 midterm elections, held just months after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

"I think Democrats are dramatically overestimating the power of abortion," Shawn Carney, president of the pro-life nonprofit group "40 Days for Life," told Fox News in an interview.

Vice President Harris delivers remarks during a campaign event at the Ellipse near the White House. (AP/Stephanie Scarbrough)

The nonprofit has a grassroots presence in all 50 states and has canvassed heavily in the 10 states that will vote directly on abortion-related measures this year: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Nevada and South Dakota.

The majority of these ballot measures seek to amend efforts passed in Republican-led states, whose leaders moved to restrict abortion in the wake of the Supreme Court's June 2022 decision on *Roe*.

Notable policies will be on the books in Missouri, where voters will have the option to reverse the state's near-total ban, and Arizona, where voters can amend the state constitution to allow abortions through the 24-week mark.

The most populous state deciding on abortion measures is Florida, home to more than 13 million registered voters.

Voters there will decide whether to lift an existing law that bans abortions after six weeks and instead extend it to the point of fetal viability between 23 and 24 weeks.

"I think we have the best chance to win in Florida," Carney said, citing the popularity in the state of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican and staunch advocate of pro-life issues.

"We have a great presence in Florida. We have great '40 Days' campaigns throughout that great state."

Signs are seen outside a polling station at Palm Beach County Library in Florida during early voting in the presidential election. (Reuters/Marco Bello)

Harris and other Democrats have worked to highlight the new risks to abortion access women face. But it's not clear what impact this will have on turnout in a presidential election dominated by economic issues and immigration.

Former first lady Michelle Obama dedicated most of her stump speech at a Harris rally last week in Kalamazoo, Mich., to outlining the many ways women could see their reproductive rights diminished further.

"Your niece could be the one miscarrying in her bathtub after the hospital turned her away," Obama told the audience. "Your daughter could be the one terrified to call the doctor if she's bleeding during an unexpected pregnancy."

Importantly, voters in states where abortion is on the ballot will vote on it independently, meaning it is "decoupled" from their presidential vote and votes for down-ballot leaders. This means that some staunch pro-choice supporters could theoretically vote for Trump and Republicans in their states while also voting to support pro-life procedures.

This "decoupling" effort would indeed reflect public opinion that has shifted to support abortion. A Fox News poll conducted this year found that a record-high number of voters now say they support legalizing abortion in some form, including two-thirds who said they supported a nationwide law that would guarantee abortion access for women.

Fifty-nine percent said they believe abortion should be legal in "all or most cases," up from the previous high of 57% in September 2022.

Pro-abortion rights activists participate in the Rally for Our Freedom to protect abortion rights for Floridians in Orlando. (Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty)

But how much the issue of abortion will drive voter turnout this year – for those who are either for or against the new ballot measure – is unclear.

National polls have seen abortion ranked consistently by voters as the third-most important issue in the 2024 election cycle, behind immigration and far behind the economy.

Just 15% of voters ranked abortion as their No. 1 priority in 2024, according to a recent Fox News poll, compared to immigration, which 17% of voters said they viewed as the No. 1 issue, and the economy, which a strong 40% of voters ranked as their top priority.

Breanne Deppisch is a politics reporter for Fox News Digital covering the Trump administration, with a focus on the Justice Department, FBI, and other national news.

## **Super Bowl champ Tony Dungy cheers Florida abortion amendment's failure**

Dungy was against Amendment 4 in Florida.

By Ryan Gaydos Fox News

Published November 6, 2024 7:08am EST

Super Bowl champion head coach Tony Dungy took a victory lap on Tuesday night after a Florida abortion amendment failed to get enough support to pass.

The measure needed a 60% supermajority to pass, the highest threshold in the country. It failed after 43% voted "No" and 57% voted "Yes."

NBC Sports broadcaster Tony Dungy looks on during the game between the Los Angeles Chargers and the Buffalo Bills at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on Dec. 23, 2023. (Kirby Lee-USA TODAY Sports)

Dungy, who was against the amendment, cheered its failure. The former Indianapolis Colts and Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach also praised voters for not passing Amendment 3, which would have legalized marijuana.

"The polls are closed in Florida and Amendment 3 and Amendment 4 both failed to pass," he wrote on X.

"Thank you to all the Florida residents who helped to protect the lives of the unborn. And we want people to realize that those expectant mothers who need help will still be able to get it. Pregnant women with health risks can get treatment. The exceptions for rape and incest are still in place. But this is a victory for babies."

NBC Sports commentator and former NFL head coach Tony Dungy on the air before a game between the Buffalo Bills and the Green Bay Packers at Highmark Stadium in Orchard Park, New York, on Oct. 30, 2022. (Mark Konezny-USA TODAY Sports)

Florida's abortion ban was a contentious topic in the once-swing-state, with proponents of the amendment arguing that the Sunshine State's current six-week abortion ban is too restrictive after it was implemented in May.

The amendment's language stated, "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider."

Florida is one of the nine states with a measure on the Nov. 5 ballot to protect access to abortion. While Florida needed at least 60% endorsement of the initiative, all other states need a simple majority to pass.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis waves from the stage on Day 2 of the Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee on July 16, 2024. (REUTERS/Elizabeth Frantz)

The majority of these ballot measures seek to amend efforts passed in Republican-led states, whose leaders moved to restrict abortion in the wake of the Supreme Court's June 2022 decision on Roe.

Fox News' Sarah Rumpf-Whitten contributed to this report.

Follow Fox News Digital's sports coverage on X, and subscribe to the Fox News Sports Huddle newsletter.

Ryan Gaydos is a senior editor for Fox News Digital.

## **Abortion laws by state**

By FOX TV Digital Team Updated November 11, 2024 4:10pm EST [Abortion Laws](#) [FOX TV Stations](#)

## **The Brief**

- Abortion advocates prevailed this election on seven state ballot measures to protect abortion rights, but three states voted to keep abortion restrictions in place.
- As of Nov. 5, more than a dozen states ban abortion at all stages.
- Here's where abortion laws stand in each state.

Abortion rights were on the ballot in 10 states this year, bringing more changes to the patchwork of abortion laws in the U.S. following the end of *Roe v. Wade*.

Abortion advocates prevailed on seven ballot measures in the Nov. 5 election and lost on three. The losses are the first on abortion rights ballot measures anywhere in the U.S. since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, proving that abortion opponents can win on ballot measures.

There were firsts on the other side, too: Three amendments call for rolling back abortion bans, including one of the nation's most restrictive laws in Missouri that bars it at all stages of pregnancy with exceptions only under limited circumstances to save the life of the woman.

Protesters rally at the Supreme Court after justices voted to overturn *Roe v. Wade* (Photo by Michael Nigro/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Here's a look at where abortion laws stand in each state following the Nov. 5, 2024 election.

### **Alabama**

Alabama bans abortion at any stage of pregnancy with no exceptions for rape and incest.

The only exception is if it's needed because pregnancy seriously threatens the pregnant patient's health.

## **Alaska**

Abortion care is legal and access to care is not restricted based on gestational duration.

State Medicaid funds cover abortion care, according to the Guttmacher Institute, an abortion rights think tank.

The right to abortion care is protected by state law.

## **Arizona**

Arizona voters on Nov. 5 approved a constitutional amendment guaranteeing abortion access up to fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks. The amendment will go into effect around Nov. 25, 2024.

Since 2022, Arizona had banned abortions after the 15th week of pregnancy. The previous 15-week law did not include exceptions for rape or incest, according to the Arizona Attorney General's website.

## **Arkansas**

Abortion is banned in Arkansas except to protect the mother's life in a medical emergency.

State law allows you to leave Arkansas and get an abortion out of state.

## **California**

Abortion is legal in California until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks. Abortion rights are protected by the state constitution, according to Guttmacher.

California is also a state where you do not have to be a resident to get treatment. You can travel to California if you are unable to get abortion care in your home state, according to California's official state website.

## **Colorado**

Abortion is legal in Colorado at all stages of pregnancy.

Colorado voters approved a state constitutional amendment on Nov. 5 enshrining protections for abortion. The measure repeals a ban on state and local funding for abortion and allows Medicaid and other government health insurance programs to cover abortion.

Democratic Gov. Jared Polis in 2022 signed into law a bill guaranteeing access to reproductive care before and after pregnancy and banning local governments from imposing their own restrictions.

## **Connecticut**

Access to abortion care is legal in Connecticut until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

The right to abortion care has been codified in state law since 1990, according to Connecticut's official state website.

## **District of Columbia**

Access to abortion care is legal in Washington, D.C.

Anyone who wishes to travel to D.C. to get abortion from other U.S. states can do so.

## **Delaware**

Abortion care is legal in Delaware until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

If a patient's health or life is at risk or there is a lethal fetal anomaly, an abortion can be performed after viability, according to the Delaware Department of Justice's website.

## **Florida**

Abortion is banned in Florida after six weeks, and will remain so after voters on Nov. 5 rejected a ballot measure to protect abortion rights in the Sunshine State. The ban includes exceptions in cases of rape, incest and human trafficking up to 15 weeks of pregnancy.

## **Georgia**

Abortion is banned in Georgia after six weeks.

The law includes exceptions for rape and incest, as long as a police report is filed, and allows for later abortions when the mother's life is at risk or a serious medical condition renders a fetus unviable.

On Sept. 30, a Fulton County judge struck down the state's six-week ban, ruling that privacy rights under Georgia's state constitution include the right to make personal healthcare decisions.

But the Georgia Supreme Court kept the six-week abortion ban in place while it considers the state's appeal.

## **Hawaii**

Hawaii law allows abortion until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks. After that, it's legal if a patient's life or health is in danger.

The state legalized abortion in 1970, when it became the first in the nation to allow the procedure at a woman's request.

## **Idaho**

Abortion is banned in Idaho at all stages of pregnancy.

Idaho makes it a crime with a prison term of up to five years for anyone who performs or assists in an abortion. In June 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to temporarily allow abortions in Idaho in the event of a medical emergency.

## **Illinois**

Abortion in Illinois is legal up until fetal liability, typically around 24 weeks.

In August 2024, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker signed multiple bills expanding protection over reproductive rights in the state.

The measures make sure pregnant women can get the emergency medical care they need, strengthen Illinois' shield laws, and ban discrimination based on reproductive health decisions, according to FOX 32 Chicago.

## **Indiana**

Abortion is completely banned and there are very limited exceptions.

One of the exceptions is if a woman's life or health is seriously at risk and even then, the abortion must take place no later than before 22 weeks of pregnancy if a "lethal fetal anomaly" is detected.

There is also an exception for those who are 12 weeks pregnant in cases of rape or incest, according to an NPR report.

## **Iowa**

In Iowa, abortion care is restricted to six weeks, meaning, a patient can't get an abortion if they are six or more weeks pregnant.

This new ban replaced a previous ban that restricted abortion care at 20 weeks of pregnancy, according to an NPR report.

## **Kansas**

Access to abortion is protected by the Kansas state constitution.

As of July, the state's highest court reaffirmed these protections.

Kansas doesn't ban most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy, but it requires minors to obtain the written consent of their parents or a guardian. Other requirements, including the 24-hour waiting period and what a provider must tell patients, have been put on hold. A lower court is considering a challenge to them by providers.

## **Kentucky**

Abortion is completely banned in Kentucky with very few exceptions.

The only exceptions are for cases when a pregnant woman's life is in imminent danger of death or permanent injury, according to an NPR report.

## **Louisiana**

Louisiana has a near-total abortion ban in place, which applies both to medical and surgical abortions.

The only exceptions to the ban are if there is substantial risk of death or impairment to the mother if she continues the pregnancy or in the case of "medically futile" pregnancies, when the fetus has a fatal abnormality.

## **Maine**

Abortion is legal in Maine at all stages of pregnancy with a doctor's approval. And lawmakers last year approved a bill to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to receive limited gender-affirming care, which does not include surgery, in some cases without parental consent.

## **Maryland**

Abortion is legal in Maryland at all stages of pregnancy.

Maryland law has protected the right to an abortion since 1991, but a constitutional amendment approved by voters on Nov. 5 will enshrine the right to abortion in the state's constitution.

## **Massachusetts**

Abortion is legal in Massachusetts up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, according to the Massachusetts government website.

The only time an abortion after 24 weeks is allowed is if it's necessary to preserve the life of the patient, their physical or mental health or if there is a lethal fetal anomaly or diagnosis.

## **Michigan**

Access to abortion care is legal and protected by law in Michigan for up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

## **Minnesota**

Abortion is legal in Minnesota at all stages of pregnancy.

Abortion rights in Minnesota are protected under a 1995 Minnesota Supreme Court decision known as *Doe v. Gomez*, which held that the state Constitution protects abortion rights.

In January 2023, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz signed a bill to ensure that the state's existing protections remain in place no matter who sits on future courts.

## **Mississippi**

As of July 2022, abortion is illegal in most cases in Mississippi.

The only exception is if the mother's life is in danger or in cases of rape that have been reported to law enforcement.

## **Missouri**

Missouri currently allows abortions only in cases of medical emergencies. There are no exceptions for rape or incest. On Nov. 5, Missouri voters approved a measure to enshrine abortion rights into the state constitution, positioning the state to undo its restrictive ban.

But the amendment does not explicitly undo the law, meaning abortion-rights advocates will need to sue to overturn the ban.

The amendment guarantees people's right to make decisions about their reproductive health, such as whether to get an abortion, take birth control or get in vitro fertilization. The measure

does allow the state legislature to enact restrictions or bans on abortion after fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

## **Montana**

Abortion is legal in the state of Montana until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

Montana voters on Nov. 5 chose to protect the right to an abortion in their state constitution. The ballot initiative sought to enshrine a 1999 Montana Supreme Court ruling that said the constitutional right to privacy protects the right to a pre-viability abortion by a provider of the patient's choice.

## **Nebraska**

Abortion is banned in Nebraska after the 12th week of pregnancy. There are exceptions for cases of rape and incest and to protect the life of the pregnant woman.

On Nov. 5, a majority of voters supported a measure enshrining the state's current 12-week ban. The measure will also allow for further restrictions.

## **Nevada**

Abortion is legal in Nevada until 24 weeks of pregnancy.

An abortion can be performed past the 24-week mark if it is deemed necessary for the life or health of the pregnant person.

On Nov. 5, voters approved a measure to enshrine Nevada's abortion rights in the state constitution. Voters must also approve the ballot question in 2026 in order to amend the state constitution.

State law has protected abortion rights in Nevada since 1990.

## **New Hampshire**

Access to abortion care is legal in New Hampshire until 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The only exception that allows an abortion after the 24-week mark is if the mother's health or life is in danger or there is a fatal fetal anomaly.

## **New Jersey**

Abortion remains legal in New Jersey at all stages of pregnancy.

The right to abortion care is protected by the state constitution.

## **New Mexico**

Abortion care in New Mexico is accessible and is not restricted based on gestational duration.

New Mexico also has shield laws for those seeking or providing abortions in the state from laws in other states, according to the New York Times.

## **New York**

Access to abortion care in New York is legal until fetal viability and protected by the state's constitution.

On Nov. 5, voters approved a measure that bans discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes."

## **North Carolina**

Abortion is banned at 12 weeks and later in North Carolina.

There are exceptions for cases of rape or incest and life-limiting anomalies in the fetus as determined by a qualified physician.

## **North Dakota**

Abortion is legal in North Dakota after a state judge struck down the state's ban on Sept. 12, 2024. The judge ruled that the state constitution creates a fundamental right to access abortion until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

In his ruling, state District Judge Bruce Romanick also said that the law violates the state constitution because it is too vague.

## **Ohio**

Abortion is legal in Ohio until 21 weeks and 6 days of pregnancy.

Last November, voters approved a constitutional amendment to ensure access to abortion care and other forms of reproductive health care.

## **Oklahoma**

Abortion is banned in Oklahoma with very limited exceptions.

The only exception is if the mother's life is in danger or if the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest and that has been reported to law enforcement, according to an NPR report.

## **Oregon**

Abortion is legal in Oregon and there are no restrictions based on gestational duration.

According to Guttmacher, Oregon has the most protective abortion rights in the nation.

### **Pennsylvania**

Abortion is legal in Pennsylvania until 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Abortion medications can be used up to 10 weeks of gestation.

### **Rhode Island**

Abortions are protected by Rhode Island's state constitution. Abortion is legal until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

### **South Carolina**

Abortion is banned at six weeks and later in South Carolina, according to Guttmacher.

The law says abortions cannot be performed after an ultrasound can detect "cardiac activity, or the steady and repetitive rhythmic contraction of the fetal heart, within the gestational sac."

The only exception is in cases of rape or incest and if the fetus will likely not survive outside the womb. It is also acceptable if the mother's health is at serious risk.

### **South Dakota**

Abortion is banned in South Dakota except to save the life of the pregnant person. There are no exceptions for cases of rape or incest.

On Nov. 5, South Dakota voters rejected a proposal to add protections for abortion rights to the state constitution, preserving a near-total ban there.

## **Tennessee**

Tennessee bans abortions at all stages of pregnancy but there are exemptions in cases of molar pregnancies, ectopic pregnancies, and to remove a miscarriage or to save the life of the mother.

Notably, doctors must use their "reasonable medical" judgment — a term that some say is too vague and can be challenged by fellow medical officials — in deciding whether providing the procedure can save the life of the pregnant patient or prevent major injury.

## **Texas**

Abortions are banned in Texas with very limited exceptions.

A 2021 law bans abortions once fetal cardiac activity can be detected, normally around six weeks.

In May, The Texas Supreme Court rejected a closely watched challenge to the state's restrictive abortion ban, ruling against a group of women who had serious pregnancy complications and became the first in the U.S. to testify in court about being denied abortions since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned.

In a unanimous ruling, the all-Republican court upheld the Texas law that opponents say is too vague when it comes to when medically necessary exceptions are allowed.

## **Utah**

Abortion is legal in Utah until 18 weeks of pregnancy.

The Utah Supreme Court put a near-total ban on hold while a challenge to the law proceeds in a lower court, according to the New York Times.

## **Vermont**

Abortion is legal in Vermont at all stages of pregnancy.

The Vermont Legislature passed a law guaranteeing abortion rights in 2019. At the same time, the state began the process of amending the constitution. The proposal was passed by two consecutively elected Legislatures and approved by voters on Nov. 8.

Vermont's reproductive rights amendment goes beyond guaranteeing a woman's right to an abortion by including the right to access family planning services and contraception

## **Virginia**

Abortion is legal until the start of the second trimester in Virginia.

Abortions are legal at all stages of pregnancy if it's needed to save the mother's life.

## **Washington**

Abortion is legal in Washington state until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

The state law also protects those seeking or providing abortions in Washington from laws in other states, according to a New York Times report.

## **West Virginia**

Abortion is banned at all stages of pregnancy in West Virginia.

The state's governor signed the ban into law in September 2023. An abortion provider in West Virginia filed a lawsuit challenging the new statute, but the suit was dropped a couple of months later.

The ban has exemptions for medical emergencies and for rape and incest victims until eight weeks of pregnancy for adults and 14 weeks for those under the age of 18. Victims must report their assault to law enforcement 48 hours before the procedure. Minors can report to the police or a doctor, who then must tell police.

## **Wisconsin**

Abortion is banned at 20 weeks and later in Wisconsin.

The exceptions for this are if the life of the mother is in danger and in cases of rape and incest.

## **Wyoming**

Abortion is legal in Wyoming until fetal viability, typically around 24 weeks.

Last year, the Wyoming Legislature passed — and Gov. Mark Gordon signed into law — measures that restricted abortion in the state, including the first-in-the-U.S. explicit ban on abortion pills. Teton County District Judge Melissa Owens in Jackson has put the laws on hold while considering lawsuits against them filed by abortion clinics in the state.

## **The Source**

This report includes information from The Associated Press, the Guttmacher Institute, the ACLU, The Arizona Republic, NPR, The New York Times, previous FOX TV Stations reporting, and various state government and health department websites.

