

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Sofia Resnick](#)



People march in Columbus near the statehouse to oppose Issue 1 during the Ohio March for Life on Oct. 6, 2023.

(Graham Stokes/Ohio Capital Journal)

Anti-abortion leaders learned Tuesday that the midterms were no fluke. **The right to an abortion is a winning issue**, and if Republicans want to remain in power, they have to match the reproductive rights movement's fierce funding and messaging strategies, [States Newsroom reported](#).

"I think for the pro-life movement, we have to now truly recognize, when it comes to abortion bans, this is something that Americans do not want right now," longtime anti-abortion activist **Rev. Pat Mahoney** told States Newsroom Wednesday, as he was traveling

home from Ohio — where [voters had just codified the right to abortion](#) — to Virginia, where Democrats won both statehouse chambers after campaigning on access.

Virginia's election results, which preview 2024, will likely thwart Republican **Gov. Glenn Youngkin's** plan to ban abortion at 15 weeks and maintain a crucial access point in the Southeast. "Right now, the pro-choice movement is more committed to funding in elections the protection and promotion of abortion than the pro-life movement is committed to ending abortion violence and making abortion unthinkable," said Mahoney, chief strategy officer for **Stanton Public Policy Center**, the political arm of a network of anti-abortion clinics headquartered in Idaho.

Leaders from national organizations echoed Mahoney's critiques of the Republicans' handling of the issue but maintained their commitment to ending abortion rights in the U.S.

"The GOP consultant class needs to wake up," **Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America President Marjorie Dannenfelser** said in a [statement](#). "Candidates must put money and messaging toward countering the Democrats' attacks or they will lose every time."

Abortion rights supporters see Tuesday's results as a clear mandate for reproductive freedom. After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned last year, 21 states eliminated or restricted access to abortion, which has led hospitals in states with bans to [deny pregnant women](#) emergency medical care.

"Looking at the results in Ohio, Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania, it is pretty clear that abortion matters to voters because it matters to people in their everyday lives," said **Angela Vasquez-Giroux**, vice president of communications and research of **Reproductive Freedom for All**, formerly NARAL Pro-Choice America. "**And I think when you look down the road to 2024, and you see places like Florida, that gives you a sense of what's possible.** Even where you have hostile legislatures and gerrymandering and all of the structural inequalities stacked against you, you can still make big change when you get the power back to voters."

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Abortion informed Pennsylvania's historically expensive judicial race



*Democratic lawmakers and abortion rights advocates rally on the Pennsylvania Capitol steps on Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022.
(Pennsylvania Capital-Star)*

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court race — the **most expensive judicial race in the state's history** — ended Tuesday with **Democrat Daniel McCaffery** elected to join the liberal-leaning court, reports [Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#).

Despite being a blue state with abortion access, the race drew in huge sums from national groups that topped \$17 million last month. Reproductive rights supporters remained focused on opponent **Carolyn Carluccio's** anti-abortion stance, which they said she scrubbed from her campaign website not long after she won the May primary.

“By punting Roe v. Wade down to the states, that just makes our state courts even more powerful and in need of protection, and in need of justices who will protect our rights and freedoms,” said **Kadida Kenner**, CEO of voting rights organization **New Pennsylvania Project**.

Kenner said Republican women in the state have also expressed concern over losing reproductive rights.

“**This will remain an issue in Pennsylvania because both Democrats and Republican women have abortions,**” she said. “And I think the realization is, ‘Oh my goodness, I might need an abortion. My daughter might need an abortion and I can no longer just count on Democrats to protect my reproductive rights.’”

After Issue 1 victory, reproductive rights advocates have more work to do



Dr. Marcela Azevedo, founder of Ohio Physicians for Reproductive Rights, listens to Nancy Kramer, co-chair of Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights, address the crowd at the Issue 1 election night party on Tuesday, Nov. 7, in Columbus, Ohio.

(Graham Stokes/Ohio Capital Journal.)

Activists in Ohio went back to work on next steps Wednesday after celebrating the passage of Issue 1, a long-fought ballot initiative that enshrines the right to reproductive health care into Ohio's constitution, reports [Ohio Capital Journal](#).

The new amendment, which [passed](#) with nearly [57% of the vote](#), will take effect 30 days after Election Day. During that time, organizers behind the amendment are working through the ongoing legal battle over Ohio's blocked six-week ban. Abortion rights supporters are also anticipating efforts from state Republican leaders to limit access.

"All of us who have been continuing to fight litigation will continue to work together to ensure that restrictions and bans that are currently in place are no longer in place," said Lauren Blauvelt, co-chair of Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights, a coalition that led the amendment campaign.

Missouri Supreme Court weighs a state block on Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood

For the second time in three years, the **Missouri Supreme Court** heard arguments Wednesday over whether the state violated the constitution when lawmakers **barred Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid reimbursements**, reports [Missouri Independent](#).

Planned Parenthood filed suit last year, and in December, **Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem concluded the state couldn't deny access to funds available to other health care providers**. But the attorney general's office appealed, arguing the "entire purpose of the appropriations process is to prioritize funds."

In a related 2020 case, **the Supreme Court struck down language in a budget bill excluding abortion providers or their affiliates from receiving Medicaid reimbursements**, calling it a "naked attempt" to legislate through a budget bill.

"Here we go again with a long line of cases where this court has met its responsibility...to advise the legislature on the limits of its authority when it comes to appropriation," said attorney **Chuck Hatfield**, who is representing Planned Parenthood.

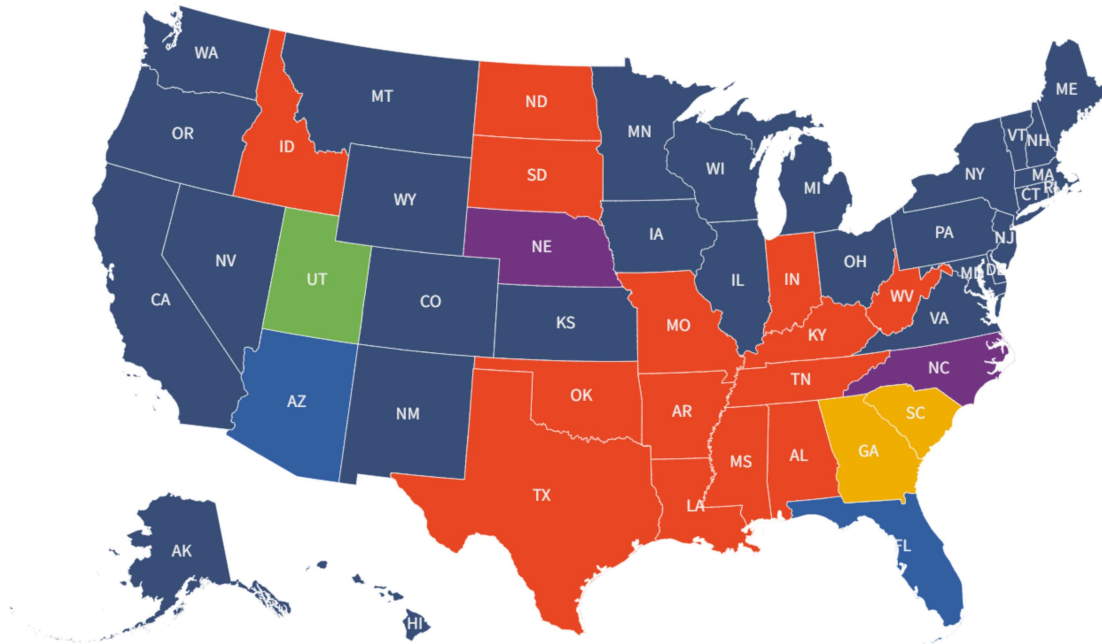
THE PULL *Commentary from Ohio*

"Doctors and health care providers can breathe a big sigh of relief right now, because they can pretty much continue along with the same health care they've been providing under Ohio's current 22-week ban without doom and uncertainty over the six-week ban hanging over them." — **David DeWitt**, editor, [Ohio Capital Journal](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- The day after winning reelection, Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear called on the General Assembly to add exceptions for cases of rape and incest to the state's near-total ban. ([Kentucky Lantern](#))
- Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin said he was 'disappointed' with election results that gave control of the General Assembly to Democrats, who ran campaigns focused on abortion access. ([Virginia Mercury](#))
- Democrats expanded their majorities in the New Jersey Legislature, which Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin attributed in part to voters seeking the preservation of reproductive rights. ([New Jersey Monitor](#))
- New Jersey Republican Sen. Ed Durr, who was criticized this campaign cycle for his conservative abortion views, lost his seat to former Assemblyman John Burzichelli. ([New Jersey Monitor](#))
- The Wisconsin state Senate passed a bill allowing expectant parents to take a tax deduction months before a child is born, though the measure is expected to be vetoed. ([Wisconsin Examiner](#))

STATE BY STATE Abortion access in the U.S.



Open this interactive map in your browser

Track state-level developments on reproductive rights anytime at [News From The States](#). Send tips and thoughts to ebrown@statesnewsroom.com, and follow her on Twitter [@elishacbrown](#).

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