

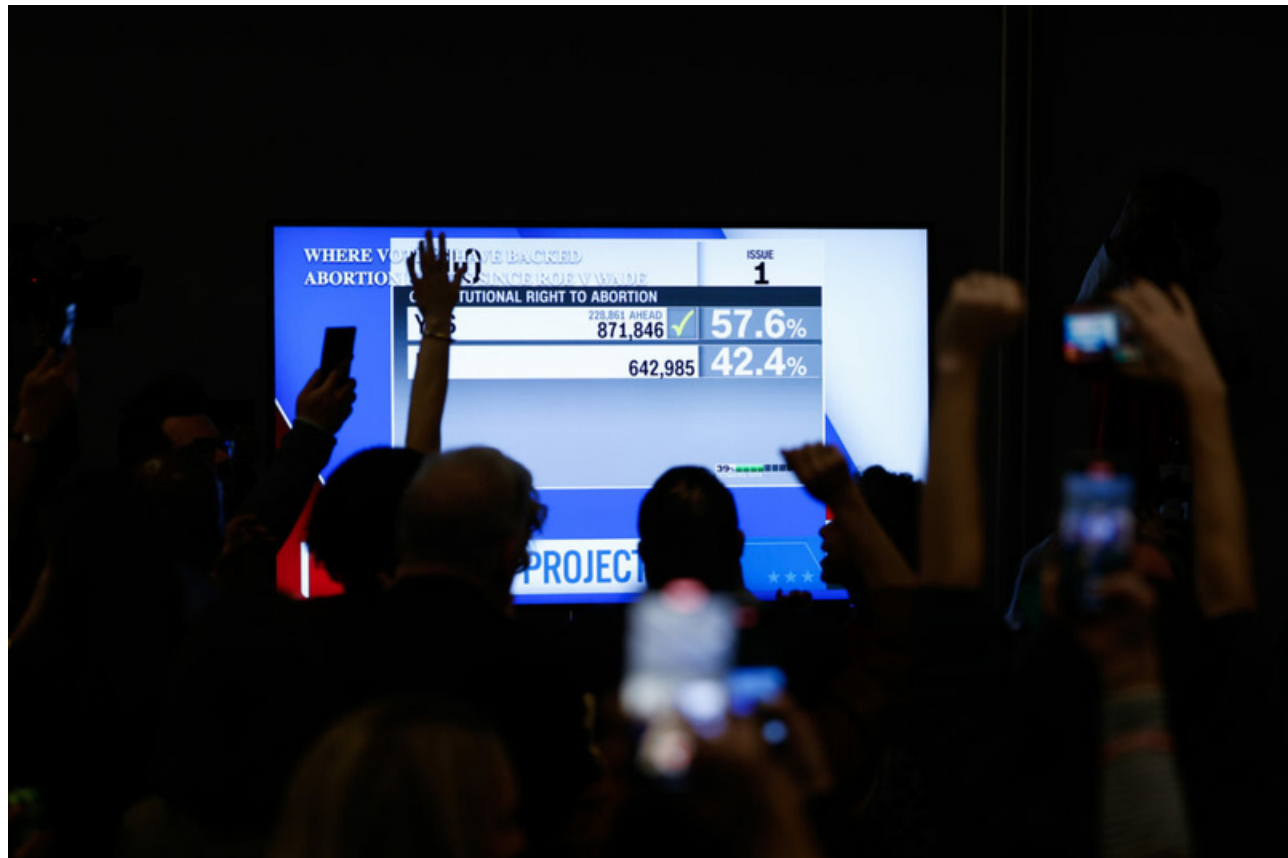
News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Ohio received national attention in November when voters approved a reproductive rights amendment after a Republican attempt to make it harder for citizen initiatives to make the ballot.
(Graham Stokes/Ohio Capital Journal)*

Reproductive rights rose to prominence this year, dominating the political landscape in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022. Around the nation, Republican lawmakers passed myriad legislation that limited abortion with no or few exceptions. In Democratic-led states, they expanded access. Advocates on both sides sought out state and federal courts to arbitrate; and citizens launched ballot initiatives to

embed reproductive rights in state constitutions.

Abortion, expected to be a key issue in the race for the [White House](#), was a point of contention during the November elections.

With reproductive health access a major focus this year, here are the top 10 stories we covered:

- [Suspect science and claims at center of abortion pill lawsuit](#) — The nation's highest court is set to review Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, a lawsuit challenging FDA approval of the abortion drug mifepristone. Claims in the case reference cherry-picked studies that break from medical consensus on the pill's efficacy and safety. One study cited by the U.S. District Judge [Matthew Kacsmaryk](#), who ruled in favor of the plaintiffs this spring, is [under investigation](#).
- [Post-Roe bans force pregnant people with life-threatening complications to travel](#) — An Idaho woman had to travel hundreds of miles to Oregon for an abortion after her fetus received a near-fatal diagnosis in April. Jennifer Adkins, along with several patients and providers, eventually sued the state, [seeking clarity](#) on medical exemptions.
- [Nebraska and North Carolina enact second-trimester bans](#) — In May, Nebraska lawmakers merged a 12-week abortion ban with a prohibition on gender-affirming care for minors after separate efforts to restrict those types of health care failed earlier in the session. A [North Carolina](#) lawmaker's decision to switch parties gave Republicans a veto-proof majority in the General Assembly, which they used to pass a 12-week abortion ban in roughly 48 hours.
- [Indiana doctor reprimanded after attorney general's complaint](#) — The Indiana Medical Licensing Board reprimanded Dr. Caitlin Bernard, an OB-GYN who provided a medication abortion to a 10-year-old rape victim from Ohio. The May ruling determined she violated patient privacy and fined her \$3,000. Republican [Attorney General Todd Rokita](#) was disciplined by a commission for disparaging Bernard on national television.
- [Religious group leaders mull murder charges for abortion patients](#) — An all-male panel of anti-abortion religious leaders called for a national ban on abortion and mulled murder charges for pregnant people during an Operation Save America convention in Georgia this summer.
- [FDA approves first over-the-counter birth control pill](#) — Federal health officials' approval of an over-the-counter contraceptive called Opill, a drug containing progestin, a synthetic hormone, is a victory for reproductive health advocates who lobbied for more than 20 years to widen birth control access. The pill is expected to be available without a prescription at pharmacies, gas stations and online by early 2024.
- [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act takes effect](#) — After workplace equality advocates pushed for the legislation for over a decade, Congress passed protections for pregnant workers. The act requires employers with 15 or more workers to provide staff and prospective employees with reasonable accommodations because of pregnancy, childbirth and other reproductive-related health care.
- [Kentucky sexual assault survivor at center of campaign ad wants to advocate for victims](#) — Hadley Duvall, a 21-year-old woman who became pregnant after she was raped at 12, appeared in an ad for Gov. Andy Behsear's reelection campaign. She criticized his opponent's support for abortion bans. Now she wants to use her platform to help others.
- [Ohio voters approve Issue 1 ballot measure](#) — Ohio's electorate voted overwhelmingly to

protect reproductive rights in November. The referendum in the Buckeye State marked the first time abortion was directly on the ballot since 2022, when voters in six states — [California](#), [Kansas](#), [Kentucky](#), [Michigan](#), [Montana](#) and [Vermont](#) — either preserved abortion rights or shut down attempts to restrict access.

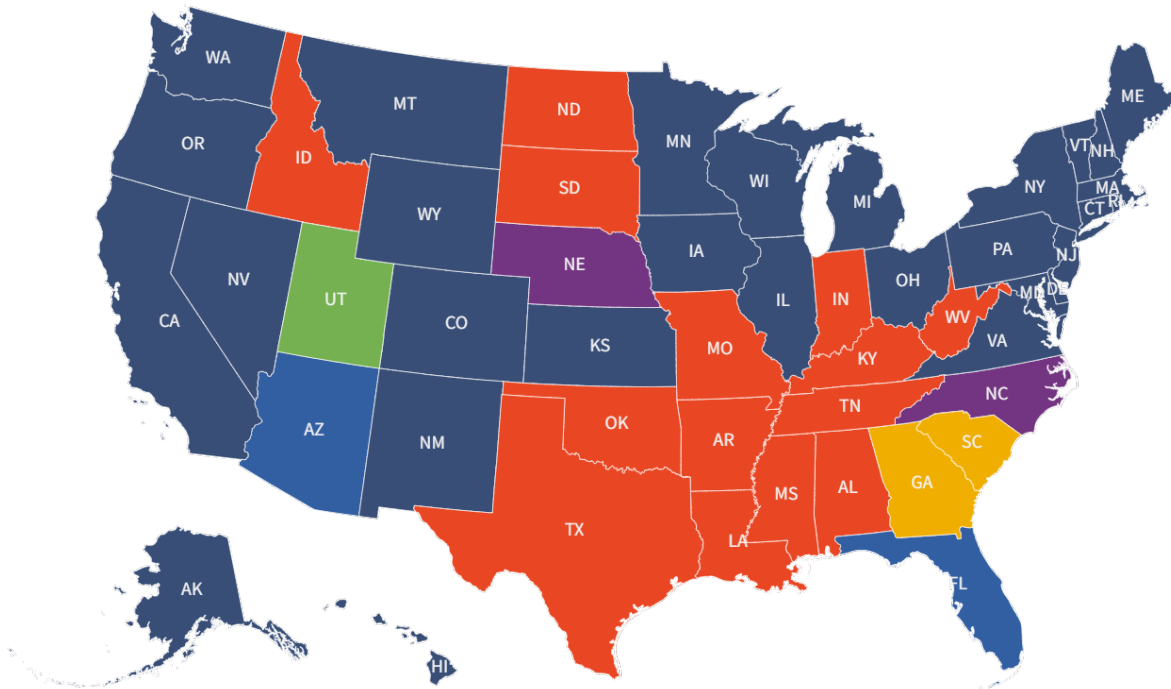
- [Virginia Democrats make campaign about abortion](#) — Democrats, who campaigned on protecting reproductive rights, held their majority in the Virginia Senate and gained control of the lower chamber during the November election. The outcome dimmed Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s plans for a 15-week ban.

THE PULL *Commentary from Idaho*

“How is it that a third-world country like Nicaragua has better maternity care than the richest country in the world? The answer is that the Nicaraguan government has the political will to provide that care. Over the past 15 years eradicating maternal and infant mortality has been a top priority that is carefully followed up on at all levels.” — **Becca Renk**, Sandpoint, Idaho, native and Ciudad Sandino resident, [Idaho Capital Sun](#)

Reproductive Rights Today will return on Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024.

STATE BY STATE *Abortion access in the U.S.*



Open this interactive map in your browser

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Send tips and thoughts to ebrown@statesnewsroom.com, and follow her on Twitter @elishacbrown.

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