

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Planned Parenthood and American Civil Liberties Union affiliates in South Dakota oppose an abortion rights petition that's gained more than 50,000 signatures. They say the initiative was rushed and would only revive a modicum of access.
(Dakotans for Health)*

Nationally-backed reproductive rights groups in South Dakota are criticizing a bid to restore abortion access in the state.

The state American Civil Liberties Union affiliate and Planned Parenthood Central States have not endorsed an abortion rights petition filed last year by Dakotans for Health. But the campaign has already collected 50,000 signatures for the measure, exceeding the roughly 35,000 needed to make the ballot, [South Dakota Searchlight](#) reports.

"We are not telling people to donate, or volunteer," said Samantha Chapman, the state ACLU's advocacy manager.

Tim Stanley, the regional Planned Parenthood's vice president of public affairs, agreed. "Constitutional amendments are serious and expensive undertakings that must be initiated after due diligence and input from those who would be impacted the most," Stanley said.

Both groups oppose the scope of the [proposal](#), which would allow unregulated abortions up to 12 weeks of pregnancy but let the state restrict the procedure in the second and third trimesters. South Dakota bans all abortions unless it's necessary to save a patient's life.

Rick Weiland, chairman of Dakotans for Health, defended the initiative. "We're getting attacked from the left and the right," Weiland said. "We must be doing something correct."

South Dakota's anti-abortion groups told Searchlight they're united in their opposition to the campaign. Dale Bartscher, the executive director of the state's Right to Life group, said the division among abortion rights supporters "does not surprise us at all."

Advocates unaffiliated with Planned Parenthood and ACLU said Weiland's team rushed to file the measure after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022.

Weiland said he wasn't going to wait for polls indicating how South Dakotans feel about abortion, noting that voters already rejected anti-abortion ballot measures in [2006](#) and [2008](#). A July 2022 [poll](#) of 500 residents found that 65% of them support an abortion referendum and 76% polled support exceptions for rape and incest.

"We've got 450,000 women out here that are living under a trigger law right now, that can't wait until national organizations decide if it's worth it or not," Weiland said.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Texas judge allows woman to get emergency abortion



*The judge said denying a woman whose fetus has a lethal condition abortion care would be a “genuine miscarriage of justice.” But the Texas attorney general issued a warning letter questioning the decision.
(Peter Gazeley/Getty Images)*

A district judge has allowed a Dallas woman whose pregnancy is [nonviable](#) to have an abortion, [Texas Tribune](#) reports. Travis County District Judge Maya Guerra Gamble granted 31-year-old Kate Cox a temporary restraining order on Thursday after Cox sued the state, which bans most abortions. **“The idea that Ms. Cox wants desperately to be a parent, and this law might actually cause her to lose that ability is shocking and would be a genuine miscarriage of justice,”** Gamble said. She also said Cox’s doctor should be protected from prosecution for performing the procedure.

When she was 20 weeks pregnant, Cox learned her fetus had [full trisomy 18](#), a likely fatal chromosomal abnormality. She sued the state shortly after the diagnosis, asking to be allowed to terminate the pregnancy.

During the hearing, Texas Attorney General Office’s lawyer Jonathan Stone argued Cox does not meet the requirements to get an abortion. The state also claimed Cox resides in Florida. Center for Reproductive Rights senior staff attorney Molly Duane said Cox lives in Dallas and used an online notary service based in Florida to sign the legal documents.

Texas cannot directly appeal Thursday’s order, the Tribune reported. The attorney general’s office would have to ask a higher court to overturn the emergency order, which would be extraordinary.

However, Republican **Attorney General Ken Paxton** sent a [letter](#) to hospitals where Dr. Damla Karsan — one of Cox’s doctors — works, saying the temporary judgment does not protect the physician “or anyone else” from prosecution. Paxton cited language from the [medical exception statute](#), saying the physician must determine abortion is necessary based

on “reasonable medical judgment.” The order granted Thursday said Karsan believes abortion is needed “in good faith,” which Paxton argues is not the legal standard.

South Carolina abortion clinic could lose business license under county proposal

Officials in Greenville, South Carolina are weighing a resolution that could revoke an abortion clinic’s business license, [SC Daily Gazette](#) reports. Councilman Stan Tzouvelekas’s **proposal would take away Greenville Women’s Clinic’s ability to operate because police respond to a high volume of calls** from the staff. His resolution says that the clinic is “a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the community.” Councilmembers were set to vote on the proposal Tuesday night, but the meeting was packed with supporters and opponents. They moved the discussion to Dec. 19.

The provider is one of three abortion clinics in the state, which has a six-week ban. Police calls for disturbances at the Greenville clinic have increased since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last year. There have been 91 calls and eight arrests so far in 2023, according to law enforcement. Anti-abortion protesters are causing the disturbance, not clinicians, said Vicki Ringer, Planned Parenthood South Atlantic’s public affairs director.

“This attempt to intimidate and potentially punish both health care providers and patients at the Greenville Women’s Clinic in a brazen political attack is shameful and wrong,” Ringer said. Councilman Rick Bradley told the Daily Gazette that the decision could boil down to the legality of removing the clinic’s business registration. “If we could shut it down, I’d be happy,” he said. “But I don’t want to shut it down for a day or two if it’ll lead to millions in lawsuits for the county.”

THE PULL *Commentary from Iowa*

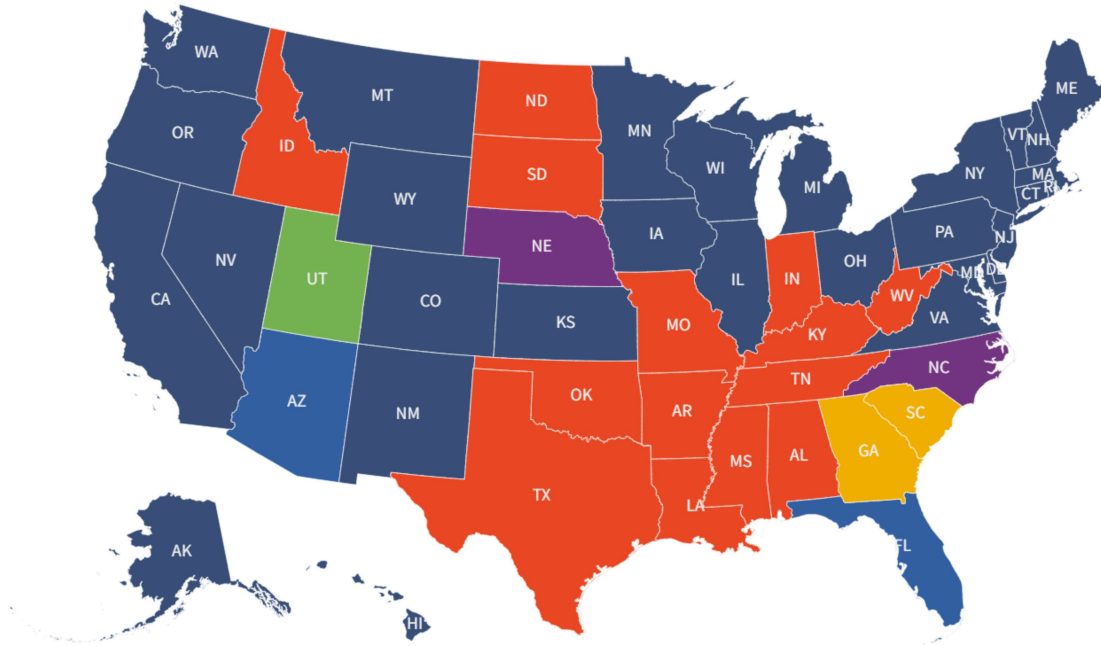
“Large corporations really don’t mind if same-sex marriage is outlawed, a woman’s right to choose is overruled or who is using what bathrooms in our schools..” — **Dave Nagle**, former U.S. Democratic congressman, [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- Abortions performed in Washington rose 23% last year, the highest increase in a decade, and the number of out-of-state patients skyrocketed. ([The Seattle Times](#))
- Anti-abortion advocates have coalesced around a national 15-week ban, arguing that’s when fetuses feel pain, but medical experts say pain sensors don’t develop until at least 24 weeks of pregnancy. ([The 19th*](#))
- Eighteen states have laws that ban abortions for mental health conditions. ([Roll Call](#))

- The reauthorization of a global AIDS relief initiative is stalled because some congressional Republicans accused the program of funding abortion providers. ([Politico](#))
- Reproductive rights activists in Mexico send abortion pills to American women who are low-income, unable to travel or lack immigration papers. ([Stat News](#))

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



Open this interactive map in your browser

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