

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Maine has widened abortion access under Democratic Gov. Janet Mills' second term. In 2023, Mills signed legislation reducing costs to care and allowing abortion later in pregnancy.
(Jim Neuger/Maine Morning Star)*

A new law in Maine eliminates copays for abortion care.

The insurance measure took effect this month and aims to make abortion more affordable and accessible, [Maine Morning Star](#) reports.

Abortions are cost-prohibitive, said Nicole Clegg, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England's interim CEO. "For folks who are struggling financially, coming up with \$550 in a matter of days or a few weeks is just not realistic," she said.

Maine lawmakers passed several reproductive rights laws last year. Democratic Gov. Janet Mills signed legislation that [allows abortions after fetal viability](#) — around 24 weeks — for medical emergencies. Legislators also passed bills that prevent localities from enacting anti-abortion provisions and shield clinicians and patients from out-of-state prosecution.

Now abortion rights supporters are drumming up momentum for a constitutional amendment. Senate Majority Leader Eloise Vitelli proposed a [resolution](#) that would declare Mainers have a right to “personal reproductive autonomy.”

Vitelli’s proposal needs support from two-thirds of state lawmakers to make the ballot. Democrats hold a legislative majority in Maine, but some Republicans would need to back the measure, too.

“It’s all about if the legislature is willing to let the voters make the determination here,” Clegg said.

Abortion has won in every state where the issue was on the ballot since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022. The latest victory for reproductive rights supporters was in Ohio two months ago, when nearly 57% of voters approved a measure codifying the right to abortion and related reproductive health care.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Infertility insurance coverage bill could help Missourians



Missouri resident Angela Crawford had her children through in vitro fertilization, but she said the treatments were costly and grueling. Crawford leads a support group for women struggling to conceive.

Just 21 states and Washington, D.C., require insurers to offer coverage for [infertility treatments](#).

A Missouri lawmaker is trying to add her state to that list. Democratic Rep. LaDonna Appelbaum is reintroducing [legislation](#) that would **mandate coverage for in vitro fertilization, embryo transfer and artificial insemination, among other infertility treatments**.

Appelbaum told [Missouri Independent](#) she was never able to have a child. Constituents with similar struggles have asked for help with fertility health care affordability — treatments can cost tens of thousands of dollars and standard insurance plans typically do not cover any of those costs. “I will do everything I can in my power to make sure that if women want to have children that they can,” she said.

If the bill passes, the law could help Missourians who are a part of the Springfield chapter of Resolve, a national infertility support group. Founder Angela Crawford has **polycystic ovary syndrome**, a hormonal condition that leads to small cysts in the ovaries and inhibits a person’s ability to conceive.

Crawford had two babies using **IVF**, but she had to take unpaid leave from work to drive from Springfield to St. Louis for fertility procedures while working at a job that was unfulfilling. The employer offered the best insurance coverage for treatment at the time, Crawford said.

She tells women interested in joining her group, “I have been at the bottom of this deep dark well, where you’re at now,” she said. “And I will climb down there with you because I know the way out.”

Indiana reports 17 abortions under ban

A near-total abortion ban took effect in Indiana on Aug. 21. Since then, 17 abortions have been reported in the state, [Indiana Capital Chronicle](#) reports. Abortions due to fatal fetal anomalies or to save a patient’s health or life are permitted under the law, and sexual assault victims can terminate pregnancies up to 10 weeks post-fertilization. The statute also requires abortions to be performed in Indiana hospitals.

Nine of the 17 abortions reported since the the state Supreme Court upheld the ban were due to lethal fetal anomalies, seven were performed to save a patient’s health or life, and one was allowed because of rape or incest, according to the Indiana Department of Health. Physicians must attest that the abortion is needed because of those certain exemptions and declare that the decision is based on reasonable medical judgment.

North Dakota court hears challenge to abortion ban



Red River Women's Clinic is a plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging North Dakota's near-total ban. The provider used to be based in the state, but clinicians moved operations to Minnesota after Roe v. Wade fell in 2022.

A North Dakota district judge heard arguments in December in a case over the state's abortion ban, which allows pregnancy terminations if the mother's health or life is at risk and in cases of rape and incest up to six weeks. **Red River Women's Clinic**, which is now based in Minnesota after moving there from Fargo in the wake of the state ban, and a group of reproductive health doctors filed a lawsuit against the state in August, arguing the ban violates the right of residents to protect their health, [North Dakota Monitor](#) reports.

Plaintiffs asked the judge to temporarily halt criminal penalties for doctors who perform abortions as the legal challenge proceeds. Doctors face up to five years in prison and a maximum \$10,000 fine if they break the law. A lawyer for the Center for Reproductive Rights argued that the ban and its caveats contain vague language. Staff from the attorney general's office contend that the law clarifies patients don't have to be near-death to qualify for the health exception.

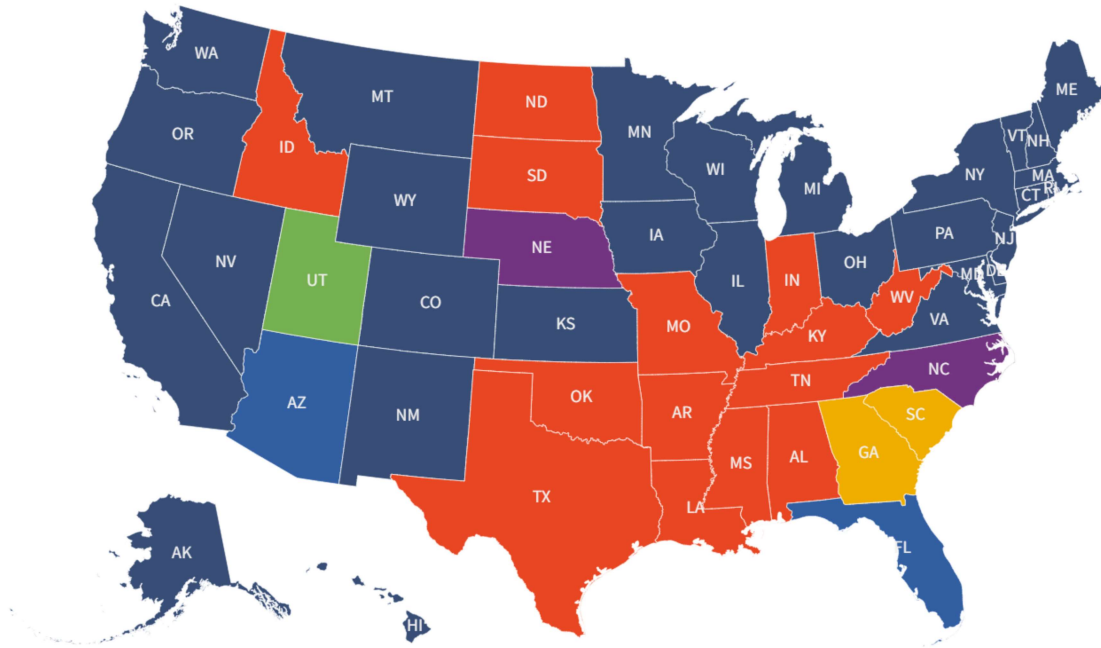
THE PULL *Commentary from Kentucky*

"Those who support the right of women to manage their own health care are speaking up for themselves. Even in Kentucky, lawmakers must realize that the callousness of abortion bans only adds to the outrage." — **Vanessa Gallman**, columnist, [Kentucky Lantern](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- Nebraska Republican Gov. Jim Pillen said he's focused on helping defeat an abortion rights ballot initiative, but has no interest in banning "prophylactics," or condoms. ([Nebraska Examiner](#))
- An Idaho judge allowed most of the claims in a case seeking to clarify exemptions for pregnancy complications to move forward, despite the attorney general's request to dismiss the lawsuit. ([Idaho Reports](#))
- Alabama's preterm birth rates are falling, but [congenital syphilis](#) cases are rising. ([Alabama Reflector](#))
- Californians are now able to pick up birth control without a prescription and get cheaper vasectomies. ([CalMatters](#))
- College students have led efforts to increase emergency contraceptive access on campus. ([KFF Health News](#))

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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