

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By Elisha Brown



*Protesters gather at the 2024 Women's March in Phoenix, Arizona. Democrats hope that a possible abortion ballot measure will boost voter engagement and flip the legislature.
(Gloria Rebecca Gomez/Arizona Mirror)*

Republicans control the Arizona legislature, but Democrats are hoping an emphasis on abortion rights will put them in the legislative majority and shift the power this November, [Arizona Mirror](#) reports.

Despite vetoes from Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs, GOP lawmakers passed several anti-abortion bills last year. They pushed [fetal personhood](#) measures, such as allowing **retroactive child support payments** from the date of a positive pregnancy test.

Yolanda Bejarano, chair of the Arizona Democratic Party, said the best way to protect Arizonans from abortion restrictions is to back Democratic candidates. "We are two seats away from flipping the legislature, where we can usher in an era where the Arizona legislature is a champion for reproductive health care," Bejarano said.

Proposals floated by Democratic lawmakers would repeal an 1864-near total abortion ban and protect contraceptive access, among other measures. Given the Republican majority, those bills are unlikely to advance this session.

Meanwhile, the courts are weighing **two pivotal cases**. Last month, the state Supreme Court heard arguments that could reinstate the 19th century ban. In October, a federal appeals court said providers could sue the state over a ban on abortions for genetic fetal abnormalities, [Reuters](#) reports.

Regardless, reproductive rights advocates are collecting signatures for a proposed **ballot measure**. The petition asks voters to secure access up to fetal viability and beyond in certain circumstances. Arizona bans abortions after 15 weeks unless the patient's life is at risk.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Pennsylvania lawmakers, abortion rights advocates hope for 2025 ballot measure



*Abortion is legal up to 24 weeks of pregnancy in Pennsylvania, but Democrats want to codify access.
(Peter Hall/Pennsylvania Capital-Star)*

Democratic lawmakers have taken the first step to securing abortion rights in Pennsylvania by proposing a constitutional amendment that would ask voters to protect a “fundamental right to personal reproductive liberty.” **State law requires that legislatures approve potential**

ballot measures twice in consecutive sessions, meaning 2025 is the earliest abortion could be on the ballot in the Keystone State. Unlike other proposals across the country, the [resolution](#) does not cite a specific gestational limit that allows legislators to intervene based on state interests.

[Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#) reports that **the chance of the measure passing is unclear:** Power in the House is divided, and Republicans control the state Senate. But the results of a **February special election** to replace Democratic Rep. John Galloway of Bucks County **will give one party a slim majority in the lower chamber.**

“We know that that race does not only determine what the majority of power looks like in the House, but it also will determine the future of abortion rights in Pennsylvania,” said Samantha Paisley, the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee’s press secretary. The committee spent six-figures in the **race for a state Supreme Court seat** last fall. Democrat Dan McCaffery won that election with more than 53% of the vote. Attack ads against his opponent, Republican Carolyn Carluccio, framed her as anti-abortion. **The liberal-leaning court is set to review a case that could undo the state ban on most Medicaid-covered abortions.**

Kansas’s lone U.S. Democratic congressman talks abortion rights post-Roe



*Democratic Rep. Sharice Davids of Kansas said the 51st anniversary of Roe v. Wade is a reminder that reproductive rights hang in the balance.
(Tim Carpenter/Kansas Reflector)*

U.S. **Rep. Sharice Davids**, a Kansas Democrat, recently discussed her commitment to preserving reproductive rights in the face of a GOP-led House. “Politicians and politics should not be determining any kind of reproductive health care decisions for a woman,” Davids told the [Kansas Reflector](#) podcast. “That should be between her and her doctor and her family.”

Last week, **she voted against two Republican-backed bills that passed in the lower chamber.** One measure would require colleges to give information to students about the right to carry pregnancies to term. Another bill would bar limits on federal funding for anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers. “These facilities are purposely deceiving folks who are seeking reproductive health care,” Davids said.

The congresswoman also said she’s worried that the U.S. Supreme Court could target contraception. Justice Clarence Thomas alluded to reconsidering *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the landmark 1965 decision that safeguarded couples’ right to birth control, in his *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Care Organization* opinion. Davids co-sponsored the [Right to Contraception Act](#) in 2023, but the legislation didn’t receive a vote.

Davids also criticized her state’s GOP lawmakers for continually pushing abortion restrictions, despite voters’ rejection of an anti-abortion constitutional amendment in 2022. “It was a broad coalition of people that spoke pretty clearly about these extreme attempts to restrict reproductive health care,” she said. “The most effective thing I can do is be clear about my wanting to protect those rights.”

Most Idahoans want to widen abortion law, survey shows

Nearly 60% of Idaho residents said they want to see changes to the state’s near-total abortion ban, [Idaho Capital Sun](#) reports. **Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they want to change existing law, while 33% of Idahoans said they’re fine with the statute.** The finding comes from the latest Idaho Public Policy Survey released on Friday. Idahoans surveyed were asked an abortion question about the state’s laws, which included an error about the legislation. The survey incorrectly said abortion is banned after six weeks in the state. Idaho bans all abortions with exceptions for rape, incest or to save the pregnant person’s life.

THE PULL *Commentary from North Carolina*

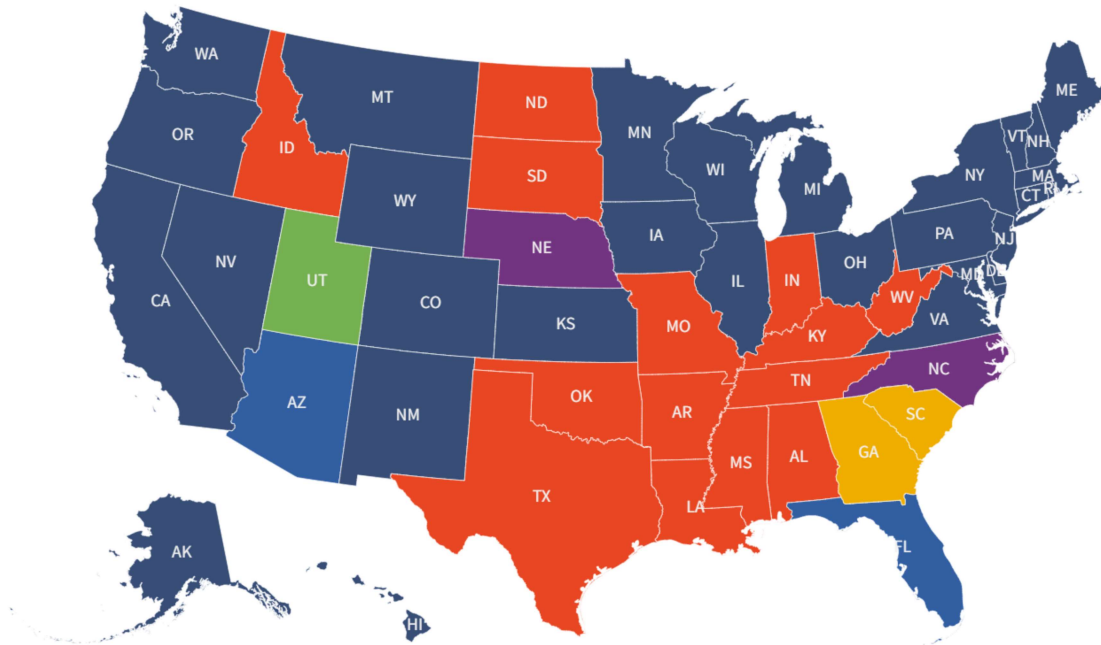
“I had an abortion the summer of my 16th birthday. I was a rising junior in high school and at 16, my focus was on getting good grades, making the varsity volleyball team, and going on a summer vacation with my family. It was my choice, and I don’t regret it.” — **Mary Lucas**, Transitions LifeCare vice president of marketing, [NC Newsline](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- An Arizona bill could bar pregnant prisoners from being induced without their consent and mandate that pat downs be performed by correctional officers who are the same gender as the incarcerated person. ([Arizona Mirror](#))

- Doctors from across the country outlined the harms of a national abortion ban. ([Michigan Advance](#))
- President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris announced steps to protect access to contraceptives and emergency abortions. ([The New York Times](#))
- The Biden administration dismissed an Oklahoma woman's complaint against a hospital — she said providers violated the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act — that denied her an abortion for a partial molar pregnancy. ([The Washington Post](#))
- Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley said she would sign a federal abortion ban if elected, but she didn't mention any gestational limits besides opposing abortions later in pregnancy. ([CBS](#))

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 X [@elishacbrown](#).

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