

# News From The States

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Similar legislation requiring Iowa students to view a fetal development video produced by an anti-abortion group has also been introduced in Kentucky, Missouri and West Virginia this year.*

A bill in Iowa would require school students to watch a fetal development video produced by an anti-abortion group.

Republicans on a House subcommittee voted to send the legislation to an education committee this week, [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#) reports. **Students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade would be shown the “Meet Baby Olivia” video, which was made by the anti-abortion group Live Action, during health classes.**

Mazie Stilwell, director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Iowa, likened the video to “anti-abortion propaganda.” “We believe that access to medically accurate, age-

appropriate sex education is of the utmost importance — of which this is not,” Stilwell said. “And frankly, as a parent of a kindergartener, the idea of showing this propaganda video next year really boggles my mind.”

Republican Rep. Anne Osmundson, one of the bill’s co-sponsors, said there was a “differing of opinions on what is medically accurate and what is scientific.”

According to the Capital Dispatch, similar legislation has been introduced in Kentucky, Missouri and West Virginia.

**THE BEAT** *States Newsroom coverage*

## Missouri Senate committee advances bid to raise the threshold for ballot measures



*The Missouri Voter Protection Coalition rallied at the State Capitol Tuesday against proposed changes in the majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment.  
(Rudi Keller/Missouri Independent)*

Hardline conservative lawmakers in Missouri advanced a proposal Tuesday that could make changing the state constitution harder. [Missouri Independent](#) reports that the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee voted 5-2 in favor of legislation that would require a proposed constitutional amendment to receive a majority of votes in most House districts in addition to a general statewide majority. The vote followed an overnight filibuster led by the Freedom Caucus over the bill. **Republicans are trying to raise the threshold for ballot measures as two efforts to put abortion on the ballot this fall are underway.**

GOP Sen. **Mary Elizabeth Coleman**, the bill's co-sponsor, said she wants to protect the Missouri Constitution from measures that should be passed as statutes. Fred Steinbach, a Respect Voters Coalition member, said that he is "against this taking the right of the people away to have their vote that they so well-earned over many wars."

**Members of the Freedom Caucus held the floor for nearly 16 hours Monday** as Senate President Pro Tem Caleb Rowden tried to bring a vote on dozens of Republican Gov. Mike Parson's appointees for key government positions, according to the Independent. The caucus relented Tuesday, allowing the nominees to be confirmed since time was running short.

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## Florida House Democrats skeptical of cost of proposed website for pregnancy services

A [bill](#) filed by Republican Rep. Berny Jacques would create a government website of public and private resources for pregnant people and parents, [Florida Phoenix](#) reports. **House Democrats have balked at its price, which the state Department of Health estimated would cost more than \$466,000.** "Almost half a million dollars just seems like a lot of money based on my conversations with people who design websites," said Democratic Rep. Robin Bartleman. She also said pregnancy information is readily available on the state health site.

Jacques defended the cost. "I've heard from a lot of people that the Department of Health website is not the most user-friendly," he said, adding that a quality website would require spending. The resources would include information on maternal health services, paternal mentorship programs and adoption agencies. **Abortion clinics were not mentioned in the bill.** Democrats also suggested the site post Black maternal mortality rates and recommended that health officials ask a group of women what resources they'd like to see.

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## Utah weighs Medicaid coverage for doula care

Doulas are holistic, non-clinician professionals who provide emotional and educational support to expectant mothers. A dozen states and Washington, D.C., either cover doula services under Medicaid or reimburse doulas for their work, according to the National Health Law Program's [policy tracker](#). Officials in Utah are considering [legislation](#) that would cover doula care for pregnant people.

**The state Senate unanimously passed a bill on Monday that would authorize Medicaid to cover doulas,** [Utah News Dispatch](#) reports. But the measure needs a second Senate vote before it can head to the House. "Research indicates that doulas are positively impacting not only the maternal and infant health outcomes, but also the experiences for the family," said **Senate Minority Leader Luz Escamilla**, a Democrat and the bill's sponsor.

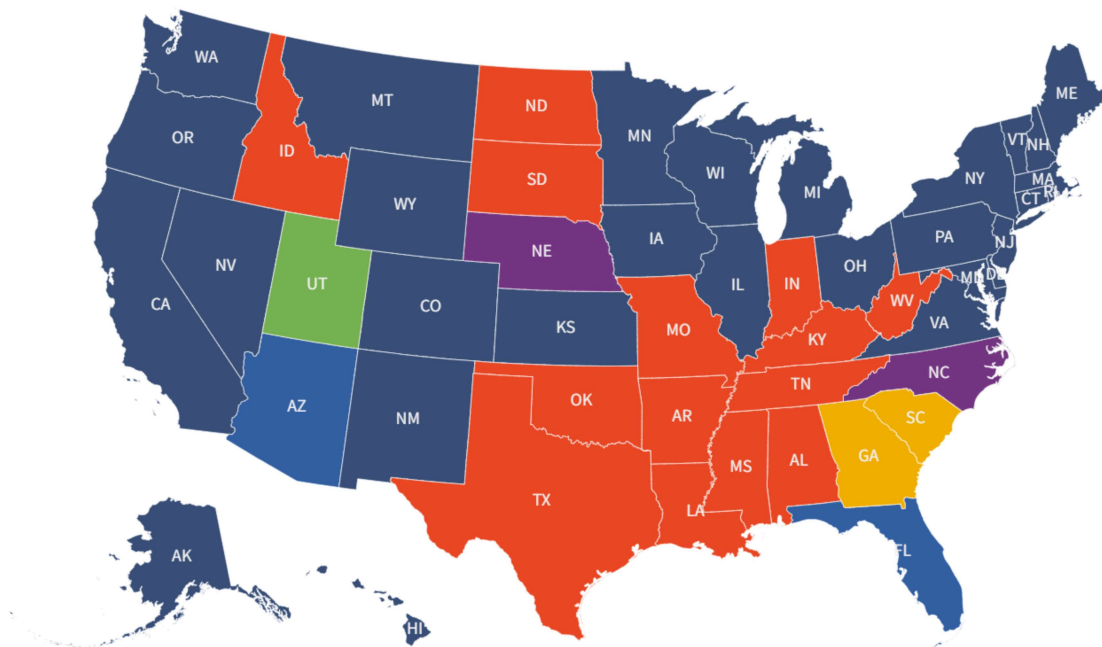
## THE PULL *Commentary from Arkansas*

“Public officials and journalists use the word ‘crisis’ a lot, sometimes when a situation is less than critical. But when it comes to the state of maternal health in Arkansas, ‘crisis’ seems a mild term. The statistics on maternal deaths certainly paint a dire picture, and [a new report](#) last week added to the sense of urgency: 60% of rural hospitals in Arkansas do not offer labor and delivery services for expectant mothers.” — **Sonny Albarado**, editor-in-chief, [Arkansas Advocate](#)

## THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- A baby born on a sidewalk in Hawaii has raised concerns about how to support the state’s large homeless population. ([Honolulu Civil Beat](#))
- Nearly 60% of Virginians polled would vote for a reproductive rights initiative similar to the constitutional amendment most Ohio voters approved in November. ([Virginia Commonwealth University](#))
- The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, is drafting executive orders to rollback the Biden administration’s abortion rights protections if Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump wins the election. ([Politico](#))
- Officials at the Pentagon and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicated that they will expand military insurance to cover IVF treatments for same-sex couples and single personnel. ([Stars and Stripes](#))

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



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Track state-level developments on reproductive rights anytime at [News From The States](#).  
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