

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By Elisha Brown



*Virginia House Speaker Don Scott and fellow Democrats are planning to bring a vote on an anti-abortion bill as a political play against Republicans.
(Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)*

The Virginia House of Delegates could vote on legislation this week that would cut off public funding for abortions.

Generally, Medicaid funds abortions in case of rape, incest, fatal fetal anomalies and to save a pregnant patient's life. But Republican Del. Tim Griffin's [bill](#) would bar public money from being used in those situations, too. Griffin's measure doesn't have a chance of passing in the Democratic-controlled General Assembly, [Virginia Mercury](#) reported.

House Speaker Don Scott said his party is forcing a full vote on the bill “so that Virginians know exactly what their representatives choose to do with the power granted to them by their constituents.”

Democrats swept the November elections, winning a majority in the House and maintaining control in the Senate. Democratic candidates largely ran on preserving abortion rights in Virginia, the only state in the South that hasn’t passed restrictions since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* nearly two years ago.

Last week, House Minority Leader Todd Gilbert suggested that he knew the bill would cause political problems for his caucus. Gilbert said he believed the legislation was intended to echo the federal Hyde Amendment, a provision annually included in spending bills that stops Medicaid from covering most abortions.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Idaho Senate passes birth control expansion bill



*A bill sponsored by Idaho Sen. Melissa Wintrow, a Boise Democrat, could get insurance companies to cover half a year’s worth of birth control.
(Otto Kitsinger for Idaho Capital Sun)*

Senators in Idaho narrowly passed a bill last week that would require **insurance companies to provide up to a six-month supply of contraceptives**, according to [Idaho Capital Sun](#).

Senate Minority Leader Melissa Wintrow said her proposal would make it easier for women to access birth control. **Several male lawmakers worried whether making insurance companies supply contraceptives was appropriate.** “I acknowledge we regulate business

in certain contexts. But I don't think we need to mandate in this context for convenience," Rep. Sen. Todd Lakey said last week. "If it's a good thing, the free market can implement it."

Republican Sen. Abby Lee noted that her male colleagues can find birth control at any gas station or convenience store. "This is about access, and it is about convenience," Lee said. "But it is also about ensuring that there is some parity in this, and this is one step forward. It is not a high-cost prescription. It is not going to be onerous for these insurance companies."

Texas officials push legal boundaries to enforce anti-abortion laws, experts say

Officials in Texas have taken extraordinary steps to enforce restrictions on abortions and gender-affirming care for minors, leading residents to travel elsewhere for treatment. For instance, **several cities and counties have passed local ordinances that bar people from traveling on roads to go out of state for abortion care**, the [Texas Tribune](#) reported. Those efforts likely violate the federal constitutional right to travel, according to Chicago-Kent College of Law professor Noah Smith-Drelich.

According to the Tribune, "When the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to set their own laws on abortion, it put them on a political crash course with each other. These recent legal maneuvers from conservatives in Texas indicate a willingness to wade into a Constitutional morass the country hasn't dealt with since the lead-up to the Civil War."

Legal experts spoke to the Tribune about how far the state will go to enforce its laws, even if it means pushing the boundaries of federalism. "Slavery is probably the best historical parallel to what we're seeing now," said Kermit Roosevelt, a law professor at Penn Carey Law at the University of Pennsylvania.

THE PULL *Commentary from North Carolina*

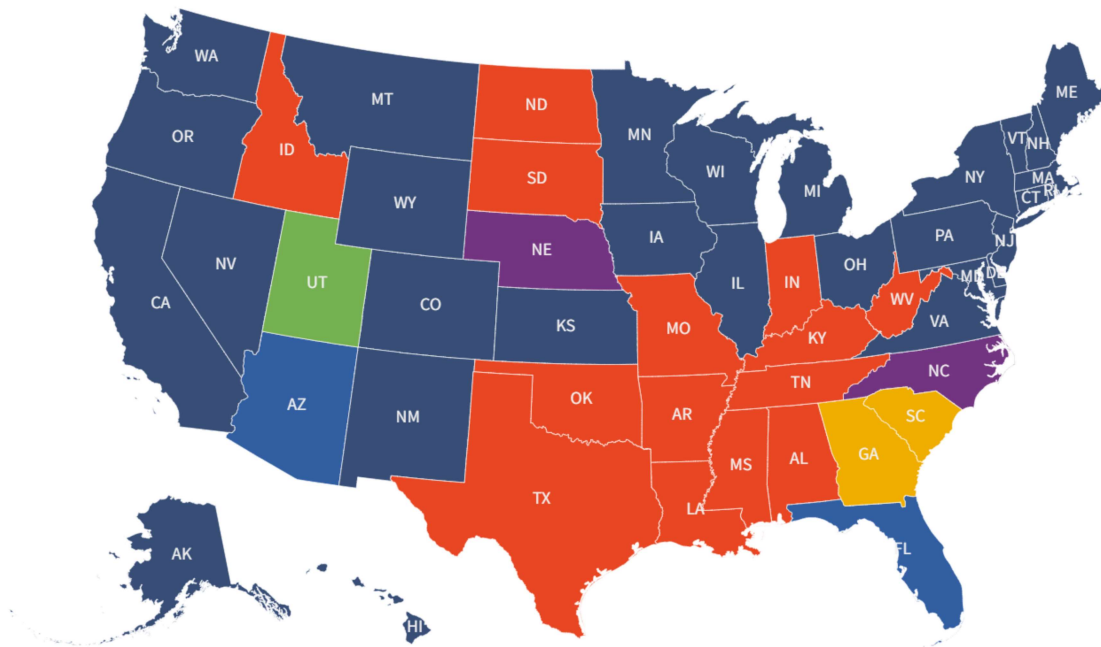
"While not directly addressing abortion access, we know that political gerrymandering and efforts to block people from voting directly impact reproductive rights. Without a representative and accountable government, anti-abortion lawmakers feel free to pass their restrictions over the will of the people.

When our state Supreme Court overturned its own rulings on voting rights and maps last year, the only thing that had changed in either case was the composition of the court. Who serves on the court matters." — **Tara Romano**, Pro-Choice North Carolina executive director, [NC Newsline](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- Maryland Democrats vying for a U.S. Senate seat said former Republican Gov. Larry Hogan's last-minute decision to run for Congress suggests Republicans want to pass a national abortion ban. ([Maryland Matters](#))
- Employees at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin voted to unionize. ([Wisconsin Examiner](#))
- New Jersey Assembly lawmakers approved a bill that could strengthen the state's family leave program. ([New Jersey Monitor](#))
- A Mississippi bill banning abortion ads is unlikely to move in the legislature. ([Mississippi Today](#))
- An appeals court asked the Florida Supreme Court to take up a case about parental consent requirements for minors who get abortions. ([Orlando Weekly](#))

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



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