

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Michigan has a reproductive rights constitutional amendment, but some abortion restrictions remain.
(Michigan Advance photo)*

Abortion rights groups have sued Michigan officials over three abortion regulations, arguing that the restrictions are burdensome.

The Center for Reproductive Rights filed a [lawsuit](#) last week in the state court of claims on behalf of Northland Family Planning Centers and Medical Students for Choice, [Michigan Advance](#) reported.

In November 2022, voters approved Proposal 3, which secured the right to an abortion and reproductive health care. But **plaintiffs want laws repealed that require a 24-hour waiting**

period for abortions, make providers disperse anti-abortion information to patients, and ban advanced practice clinicians from providing abortions.

Democratic Attorney General Dana Nessel, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs acting Director Marlon Brown and Department of Health and Human Services Director Elizabeth Hertel are listed as defendants.

The laws are “paternalistic and medically baseless restrictions,” Rabia Muqaddam, senior staff attorney at the Center for Reproductive Rights, [said](#) in a press release. “With this lawsuit, we hope to eliminate these harmful restrictions and ensure the state’s laws reflect the will of Michigan voters.”

Meanwhile, Democratic **Gov. Gretchen Whitmer** rolled out her latest budget recommendations, which include giving the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services nearly \$2 billion to fund behavioral health clinics and racial equity programs.

Some \$15.7 million would go to Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies, a program that aims to improve maternal and child health outcomes after pregnancy, according to the [Advance](#). Whitmer also proposed that \$24 million fund communities that brainstorm approaches to support new parents and babies.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Virginia House Republicans reject own member’s anti-abortion bill



*House Minority Leader Todd Gilbert, left, Del. Tim Griffin, center, and Del. Bobby Orrrock return to their seats on the House floor after hearing Democrats reject their efforts to amend Griffin's anti-abortion bill.
(Graham Moomaw/Virginia Mercury)*

Most lawmakers in the Virginia House of Delegates voted to remove an anti-abortion bill from the agenda Monday after the Democratic-controlled chamber forced a vote on the measure.

House Speaker Don Scott brought a bill to the floor written by a freshman GOP lawmaker that sought to ban the use of public funds for all abortions, according to [Virginia Mercury](#).

House Minority Leader Todd Gilbert tried to amend the bill — he wanted to add exceptions for rape, incest and to save the life of the mother — and implied that it was broadly written by GOP Del. Tim Griffin due to his inexperience.

Democrats blocked Republicans efforts to tweak the legislation. “If the patron didn’t know what he was doing, maybe he should’ve stayed out of women’s business,” said Democratic Del. Candi Mundon King, who called the bill a “slap in the face” to women.

The legislation was rejected by a nearly unanimous vote, but Republicans called the event a political stunt. “I don’t know where the absurdity of this theater ends,” Gilbert said.

Washington Senate passes hospital regulation bill in bid to protect abortion access

The Democratic-controlled Washington Senate recently voted to pass a [bill](#) that would increase regulations of hospitals that merge. **Democrats said they support the measure because it would strengthen access to abortion and gender-affirming care in a state where many hospitals are religiously-affiliated.**

“A right without access is not a right,” said Sen. Emily Randall, a Democrat and the bill’s sponsor. “If we continue to erode access to abortion care, then our neighbors will not be able to access that care in Washington.”

Republicans argued that the legislation would hurt small, rural hospitals and give too much power to the attorney general, who could block or oversee mergers, [Washington State Standard](#) reported.

“This bill puts paperwork over people,” said GOP Sen. Ann Rivers. Hospitals and health systems requesting to merge would have to detail how the move would impact availability of reproductive, gender-affirming, emergency, charity and end-of-life care. The attorney general’s office would also determine if the mergers would increase health care costs.

California Medicaid rules diminish midwifery care,

report shows



*Midwives in California said the state Medicaid program shortchanges their work.
(Getty Images)*

California has one of the lowest maternal mortality [rates](#) in the U.S. But a new report warns that access to maternity care can worsen if state officials don't make it easier for community midwives to practice, according to our partner newsroom [CalMatters](#).

Stiff licensing requirements, regulations and insurance policies hamper the work of midwives who operate outside of clinical settings, researchers at University of California, San Francisco found.

This issue could exacerbate maternal health care in California, where [maternity wards are closing](#) and [pregnancy-related deaths are increasing](#).

More than 1,000 nurse midwives — they have [full practice authority](#) in 27 states and Washington, D.C. — are registered with MediCal, California's Medicaid program, according to state data. But **less than 100 community midwives, who specialize in home health visits for low-risk pregnancies, are enrolled in the program**, which pays for 40% of births in the state.

"The overarching policy issue for licensed midwives in California is that we continue to be regulated under a very dysfunctional arrangement," said Rosanna Davis, president of the California Association of Licensed Midwives.

Community midwives told CalMatters that MediCal offers low reimbursements rates and often pays them late for their services.

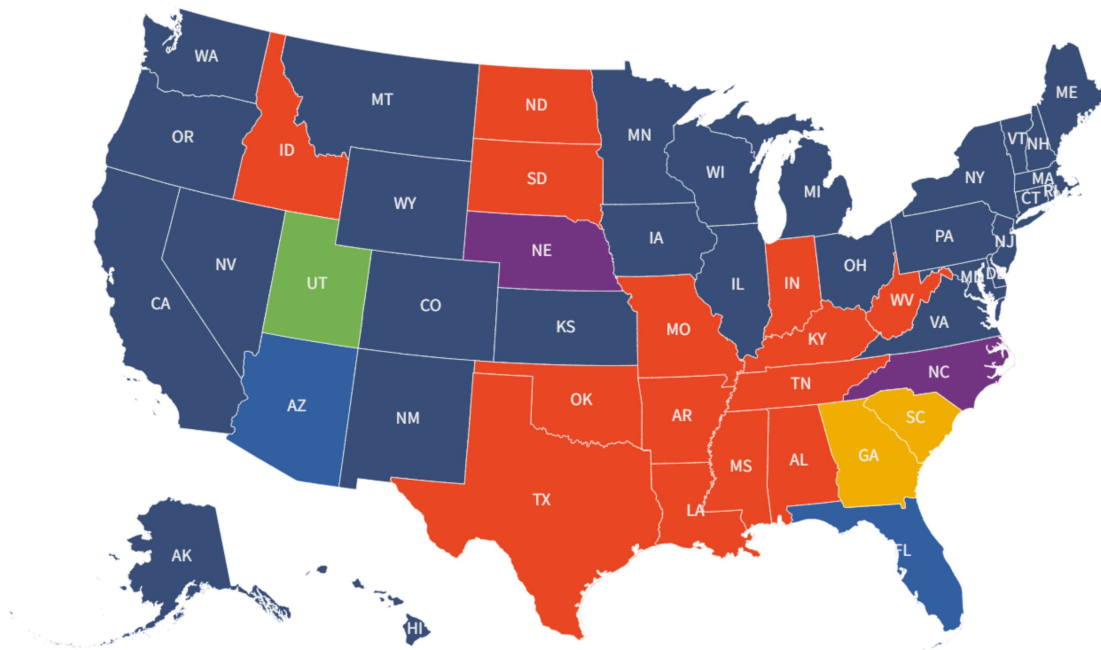
"We've had people have two or three babies with us before we get paid for the first one," Madeleine Wisner said. Wisner closed her Sacramento birth center in October and plans to

move to [New Zealand](#), where she will make \$60,000 a year.

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- The Republican Party of Florida voted to back an anti-abortion resolution in an effort to thwart an abortion rights petition. ([Politico](#))
- Several Michigan laws, including one removing a separate insurance rider requirement for abortions, took effect today. ([Bridge Michigan](#))
- New York City officials unveiled a “Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Bill of Rights” that will be shared with abortion providers and advocates. ([Gothamist](#))
- Anti-abortion centers are sometimes the only options for pregnant patients in states with abortion bans. ([The 19th*](#))

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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