

# News From The States

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



*Anti-abortion supporters gathered at an Ohio March for Life Rally in October 2023. Most voters approved a reproductive rights constitutional amendment last year.  
(Graham Stokes/Ohio Capital Journal)*

Even though 57% of Ohio voters approved Issue 1 — a reproductive rights ballot measure — in November, Republicans mounting bids for legislative and congressional offices are still touting their anti-abortion views.

**Experts told [Ohio Capital Journal](#) that the candidates are playing to the GOP base during primaries but will likely tone down their rhetoric during the general election.**

“First things first, they have to get nominated,” said Paul Beck, a political scientist at Ohio State University. “They are vying for the support of a base that is strongly anti-abortion, and

they don't want to be perceived by voters in that base as somebody who is softening on the abortion issue.”

**Some Republican candidates have maintained they oppose abortion but said the amendment shuts down the possibility of additional restrictions.**

J.R. Majewski, who is running in Ohio's 9th U.S. Congressional District, said “I'm pro-life, 100%, without exception. However, I'm also a realist and we've lost three really strong battles in this state in the past few years.”

**THE BEAT** *States Newsroom coverage*

## Missouri Senate Dems filibuster GOP bill that would change petition process



*Sen. Mary Elizabeth Coleman, a Missouri Republican, is sponsoring bills that would defund Planned Parenthood and make it harder to change the state constitution.  
(Annelise Hanshaw/Missouri Independent)*

Democrats in the Missouri Senate stalled a vote on a [bill](#) that would increase the threshold for passing constitutional amendments. Members of the minority party held the floor for more than five hours Monday and six hours on Tuesday, [Missouri Independent](#) reported. The filibuster ended when the Senate adjourned this week.

**Republican Sen. Mary Elizabeth Coleman's bill would require initiative petitions to receive a majority of votes in five of the state's eight congressional districts and a statewide majority in order to amend the Missouri Constitution.** According to an analysis by the Independent, just 23% of voters could defeat a measure that has overall support if the legislation passes.

**Democratic lawmakers said the bill's sole purpose is to make it more difficult for an abortion rights ballot measure to pass** in the state, which has a near-total ban.

Missourians for Constitutional Freedom is gathering signatures for a petition that would allow abortion up to fetal viability or beyond if the patient's health or life is at risk. "I don't fundamentally want to do this because they're collecting signatures for abortion," said Coleman, who is running for [Congress](#) and sponsored a bill that would bar [Planned Parenthood](#) from receiving state Medicaid funds.

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## Maryland governor budgets \$15 million for reproductive health access

Democratic **Gov. Wes Moore's** budget [proposal](#) includes roughly \$15 million for improving reproductive health care and abortion access across the state. University of Maryland, Baltimore would receive a \$10.6 million grant for the state's Abortion Care Clinical Training Program, which helps providers and their clinical care teams. Another \$5 million would fund the Maryland Medicaid Family Planning Program and Reproductive Health Program.

The funding needs approval from the Democratic-controlled legislature, according to [Maryland Matters](#). **Moore's announcement comes nine months ahead of the November election, when voters will decide whether to [codify](#) the right to an abortion.** Former Gov. [Larry Hogan](#) could be on the ballot, too: The Republican announced a last-minute bid for a U.S. Senate seat last week. Democratic congressional candidates argued that his campaign could help the GOP enact a federal abortion ban.

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## Alabama Senate advances bill that would make maternal, menstrual products tax-free

An Alabama Senate committee approved a [bill](#) Wednesday that would **remove sales tax from certain maternity, baby and menstrual hygiene goods**. Republican Sen. Arthur Orr said his measure would be an affordable way to support families with children, [Alabama Reflector](#) reported. Baby formula, bottles, wipes, breastmilk pump equipment, diapers, maternity clothes and menstrual products would be tax-free under the proposal.

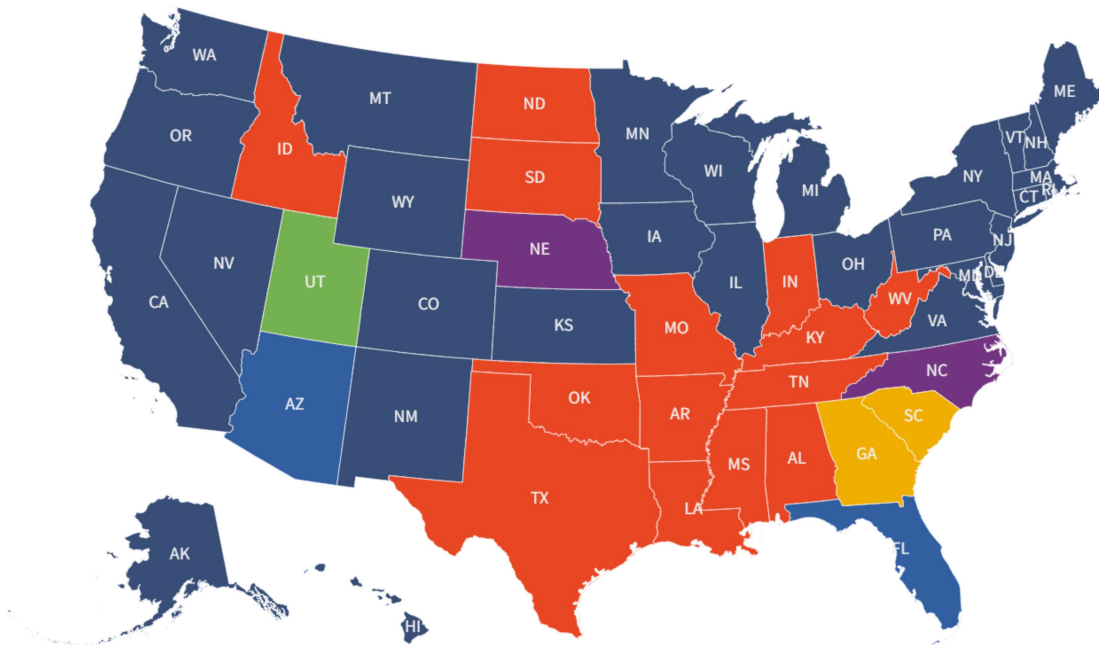
"The other aspect on the feminine hygiene products (is) why should half of our population have to be taxed on something that is a necessity and the other half not?" Orr said. The committee added an amendment proposed by GOP Sen. Garlan Gudger that "altered the bill's treatment of local taxes," according to the Reflector. **Alabama and at least [20 other states](#) still tax period products.**

“The idea that researchers looking at data as controversial as abortion might report findings that are in concert with their beliefs on the issue comes as little surprise... The bottom line: Multiple credible studies and decades of real-world experience have confirmed the safety and efficacy of mifepristone. Let’s hope the Supreme Court sticks to such proven facts next month when it considers anti-abortion groups’ challenges to the longstanding approval of the medication.” — **Rob Schofield** , editor, [NC Newsline](#)

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

- The Virginia Senate passed a bill that would shield abortion patients and providers from out-of-state investigations. ([Virginia Mercury](#))
- Vice President Kamala Harris is set to bring her “Fight for Reproductive Freedoms” tour to Michigan next week. ([Michigan Advance](#))
- U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, said a data company allegedly tracked visits to some 600 Planned Parenthood clinics across the nation. ([Politico](#))
- Anti-abortion centers took in more than \$1 billion during the 2022 fiscal year, including nearly \$350 million in government funds. ([The Guardian](#))
- Reproductive rights advocates behind abortion rights ballot initiatives are split on whether to include mental health exemptions. ([Associated Press](#))

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



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