

News From The States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By [Elisha Brown](#)



Alabama House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels wants to secure access to birth control. The Democrat said the state Supreme Court's February ruling that deemed embryos "unborn children" left him wondering, "What's next?"

(Brian Lyman/Alabama Reflector)

House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels, the same Alabama Democrat who sponsored a [constitutional amendment](#) to protect IVF, is [pushing](#) a bill that would protect access to contraception. Daniels' proposal would also allow providers to distribute contraceptives and advise their patients, [Alabama Reflector](#) reported.

Daniels told the Reflector he never thought a frozen embryo would be considered a child. But he questioned what's next after the Alabama Supreme Court's [IVF decision](#) upended the future of infertility treatments last month. "They're coming for everything, and our freedom, as we know it, is in jeopardy," he said.

A Republican-backed [IVF law](#) Gov. Kay Ivey signed last week had bipartisan support, but it's unclear if Daniels' birth control measure will gain steam. **The legislation was presented as a short-term fix — it covered infertility providers and patients from criminal liability but didn't address whether embryos are "people" under the law.** Rep. Terri Collins and Sen. Tim Melson, both Republicans, cosponsored the bill. Melson said he didn't want to put his colleagues in an uncomfortable position by addressing that quandary.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Undecided voters could sway fate of Missouri abortion rights initiative, poll shows



Meladee Patterson, a volunteer with Missourians for Constitutional Freedom, joins a signature-gathering event on Feb. 6, 2024 in Kansas City. The group has until May to collect nearly 200,000 signatures for a abortion rights petition.

(Anna Sporre/Missouri Independent)

A new [poll](#) found that **19% of voters are unsure if they would vote to restore abortion rights in Missouri** if a proposed constitutional amendment makes the November ballot. Meanwhile, **44% of respondents said they would approve the measure, while 37% were**

opposed, according to a St. Louis University/YouGovPoll. The partisan breakdown of the results showed 71% of Democrats back the measure, and 24% of Republicans support it, [Missouri Independent](#) reported.

Missourians for Constitutional Freedom, the group circulating a petition that would allow abortion up to fetal viability and beyond in certain cases, has until early May to collect 171,000 signatures. **Poll director Steven Rogers said persuading undecided voters is key to the measure's potential success.** "Voters probably do have opinions about abortion, but they're going to need a little bit of education about this ballot initiative," he said.

In the legislature, Republican lawmakers are trying to make it harder to change the state constitution, according to the [Independent](#). A Senate panel heard testimony this week about legislation sponsored by Republican Sen. **Mary Elizabeth Coleman** that would require initiatives to get a statewide majority plus majority votes in five of Missouri's eight congressional districts. Coleman said defeating the abortion petition isn't her goal. She wants to reinstate "**ballot candy**" to her proposal, including provisions that would ask voters if they want to bar non-citizens from voting. Non-citizens already can't vote.

Maine attorney general says Republican AGs make shield laws necessary

Democratic Attorney General **Aaron Frey dismissed threats from 16 Republican attorneys general** who criticized a bill that would protect out-of-state patients seeking reproductive health care services and gender-affirming treatments in Maine. Frey said **accusations that the proposal is unconstitutional are "meritless"** and an attempt to intimidate state lawmakers, [Maine Morning Star](#) reported.

"Unfortunately, shield laws have become necessary due to efforts in some objecting states to punish beyond their borders lawful behavior that occurs in Maine and other states," Frey [wrote](#).

He said he's confident that the Maine [bill](#) will uphold in court if it passes. More than two dozen states have shield laws that safeguard patients and providers from interstate investigations related to reproductive health and gender-affirming care, according to the [Guttmacher Institute](#).

Frey responded to a letter sent to him, Gov. Janet Mills and legislative leaders, all Democrats, Monday by Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti and 15 other Republican attorneys general. **The group represents states where officials have moved to restrict abortion and transgender health care for minors.**

Proposal would drop 'Meet Baby Olivia' video

reference from Iowa education bill

A Republican senator suggested references to the “Meet Baby Olivia” video produced by Live Action, an anti-abortion group, should be removed from an education bill, [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#) reported. Sen. Jeff Taylor’s amendment would still require students in grades seven through 12 to learn about the human stages of development from fertilization to birth. **His proposal would also make teachers show ultrasound videos** that convey “the humanity of the unborn child.”

Mazie Stilwell, director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Iowa, said she appreciated Taylor’s amendment, but the changes don’t remedy the issue. Iowa State Education Association lobbyist Melissa Peterson pressed lawmakers to follow the current educational standards and said her group is opposed to the politicization of curricula. “I would encourage the legislative body to take the appropriate way out of this conversation, and leave standards and adjustments to the experts — the education professionals,” Peterson said.

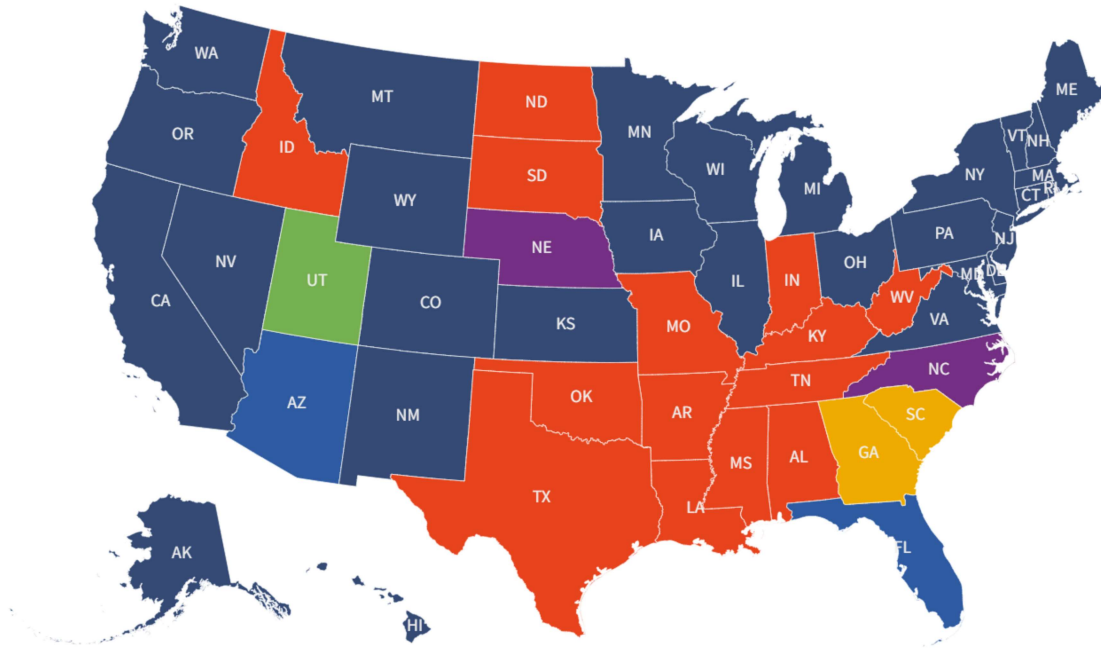
THE PULL *Commentary from Kentucky*

“[House Bill 467](#) advocates exclusively for perinatal palliative care in response to fatal diagnoses, neglecting the diverse needs and lived experiences of expectant parents and their families. The legislation, which cleared a House committee last week, compounds the challenges and emotional burdens faced by pregnant people in these deeply personal circumstances.” — **Katie Vandegrift**, Midway resident and mother who navigated pregnancy losses, [Kentucky Lantern](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Texas law requiring minors to get parental consent for contraception. ([Texas Tribune](#))
- Five Democrats running for Pennsylvania attorney general agreed on guns, abortion rights and TikTok during a recent debate. ([Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#))
- Officials in Cook County, Illinois announced a proposal to automatically conceal details about reproductive health in court documents. ([Chicago Sun-Times](#))
- Egg freezing can cost up to \$20,000, yearly storage is roughly \$700 and IVF can cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000 for each round. ([Marie Claire](#))

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



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