
TODAY

from States Newsroom

Thanks for being here and [supporting our work](#).



From Kelcie Moseley-
Morris

✉ kmoseley@statesnewsroom.com
X [@KelcieMMorris](https://twitter.com/KelcieMMorris)



The Florida Supreme Court ruled Monday that the state constitution does not include access to an abortion, but allowed the ballot initiative to proceed in November. The court also upheld an abortion ban that means a six-week ban will go into effect in 30 days.

The **Florida Supreme Court** ruled Monday that a **six-week ban** on abortion statewide can **go into effect in 30 days**, but it also allowed a **ballot initiative** to include abortion access in the state constitution to **move forward in the November election**, [Florida Phoenix reported](#).

The court **overruled** a 1989 case that held the Florida Constitution's Privacy Clause protected the right to an abortion, according to the Phoenix. It was

among the strongest in the country, going **beyond what was permitted** by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade in 1973.

The court determined in a **4-3 opinion** that the ballot language **did not** mislead voters, break the single-subject rule for ballot initiatives or violate the U.S. Constitution, so it could be approved. The group organizing the initiative collected nearly **1 million petition signatures**. If it meets the **60% approval threshold** needed to put it in the state constitution, abortion access will be **protected from government restriction** before viability or when necessary to protect a patient's health as determined by their provider, according to the text.

Attorney General Ashley Moody argued against approving the initiative, and she was joined by anti-abortion organizations such as **Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, Liberty Counsel** and **Florida Voters Against Extremism**, all of whom argued the ballot language was **too ambiguous**. Moody also said the amendment would give health care providers the power to determine what constitutes "viability" and whether the health of a pregnant person **justified a late-term abortion**. She said in essence, providers would be "serving as their own regulators."

The six-week ban will **take effect in 30 days** because the court's ruling upheld the existing 15-week ban. A condition of the six-week ban when it passed into law in 2023 was that the court had to agree it was **constitutional**. Now that it has, the six-week ban will take precedence. Most people **do not know they are pregnant** by six weeks.

THE BEAT *States Newsroom coverage*

Tennessee House candidate takes her abortion story door-to-door



House District 75 Democratic candidate Allie Phillips stands in her home next to a calendar of Taylor Swift, her favorite artist. (John Partipilo/Tennessee Lookout)

For many people who have had an abortion, the intimacy of the experience and the **stigma** that often comes with it makes them reluctant to share, even among their closest friends and family, especially now that the procedure is **illegal in 14 states**. But not **Allie Phillips**, even before she decided to run for **House District 75 in Tennessee**, [States Newsroom reports](#).

Phillips started canvassing for the legislative seat in **February**, going door-to-door and telling perfect strangers about one of the worst things that has ever happened to her — when she was **forced to leave her home state in 2023 to terminate a nonviable pregnancy**.

Phillips, who is running as a Democrat against one-term **Republican Rep. Jeff Burkhart**, is one of the first candidates to run for office with her own personal story of seeking an abortion in a state where it is banned since the Dobbs decision, and she's one of few who has ever run with such an emphasis on **her own abortion story**, as far as she and her campaign manager can determine. With each door knock, she and her team weren't quite sure **what kind of reaction they would get**.

One woman who hasn't been a registered voter for many years was **unaware that Roe v. Wade, the landmark case that made abortion**

access a constitutional right in 1973, was no more. She told Phillips she was sorry about her baby, and agreed that Phillips should have been able to terminate her pregnancy in Tennessee.

As of March 26, Phillips has qualified to appear on the **Aug. 1 primary ballot**. So far, she has no Democratic opponents.

“Part of me doesn’t like politicizing my story,” she told States Newsroom. “I feel like I’m using my life for a political purpose. But unfortunately, **our government has made our wombs a political topic**. So I will just fight fire with fire at this point and use their own ammunition against them, in hopes that I win the battle at the end.”

Arkansas begins work to address high maternal, infant mortality rates



Arkansas is the only state left in the country that has not [at least passed legislation](#) intending to expand postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months after delivery. (Getty Images)

Following an executive order issued by **Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders**, [Arkansas Advocate reported](#) agencies are launching initiatives and coordinating outreach events to **improve maternal outcomes** in the state,

where maternal mortality rates are the **highest** of anywhere in the country and infant mortality rates are the **third highest**.

Sanders' order created a committee with goals of **increasing access to quality maternal health services** and **improving education** around maternal health at all stages of pregnancy and after delivery, as well as statewide coordination for **maternal health data and reporting**.

Officials told legislators on Friday that they plan to launch a **pilot program** in five counties with high numbers of Arkansans who receive **no maternal health care** that will review clinic procedures and services and help connect people with care.

Arkansas is the **only state left in the country** that has not [at least passed legislation](#) intending to expand postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months after delivery. A 2023 bill **did not advance** in the legislature over cost concerns.

Democratic AGs ask U.S. Supreme Court to protect emergency abortions

A group of **attorneys general** from Democratic-led states have **submitted an amicus brief** to the **U.S. Supreme Court** asking it to allow emergency room physicians to perform abortions **without fear of prosecution in states where the procedure is criminalized**, [according to Arizona Mirror](#).

The case before the court, which will hear oral arguments on **April 24**, is about whether a near-total abortion ban in **Idaho** is in conflict with the federal **Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act**, which requires hospitals to provide **stabilizing care** for patients regardless of their ability to pay. During pregnancy, doctors have said, the stabilizing treatment for infections and other conditions that occur before a fetus is viable is to terminate the pregnancy. **Without that protection**, patients in Idaho have been [transported by air](#) to **Salt Lake City, Utah**, to terminate.

The AGs said in the brief, filed Friday, that weakening EMTALA's protections would **encourage other anti-abortion states** to further restrict care and continue to strain health care systems in their states, which are **already seeing higher demand** from patients traveling from anti-abortion states.

“Allowing states like Idaho to eviscerate EMTALA’s nationwide guarantee of stabilizing emergency care and protection against patient dumping will **drive many pregnant patients** to amici states for emergency abortion care to preserve their health,” reads the brief. “That influx may result in **more crowded waiting rooms**, increased **delays** for urgent healthcare services, and **overall strains** on many amici states’ healthcare systems.”

THE PULL *Commentary from Missouri*

“Lawmakers, in a panic over the prospect that voters might overturn their abortion ban, are moving at what for them amounts to lightning speed on a constitutional amendment to make it harder to pass initiative petitions in Missouri. ... The Independent has calculated that if the latest measure finds its way into the state constitution, just 23% of voters could thwart an initiative petition.”

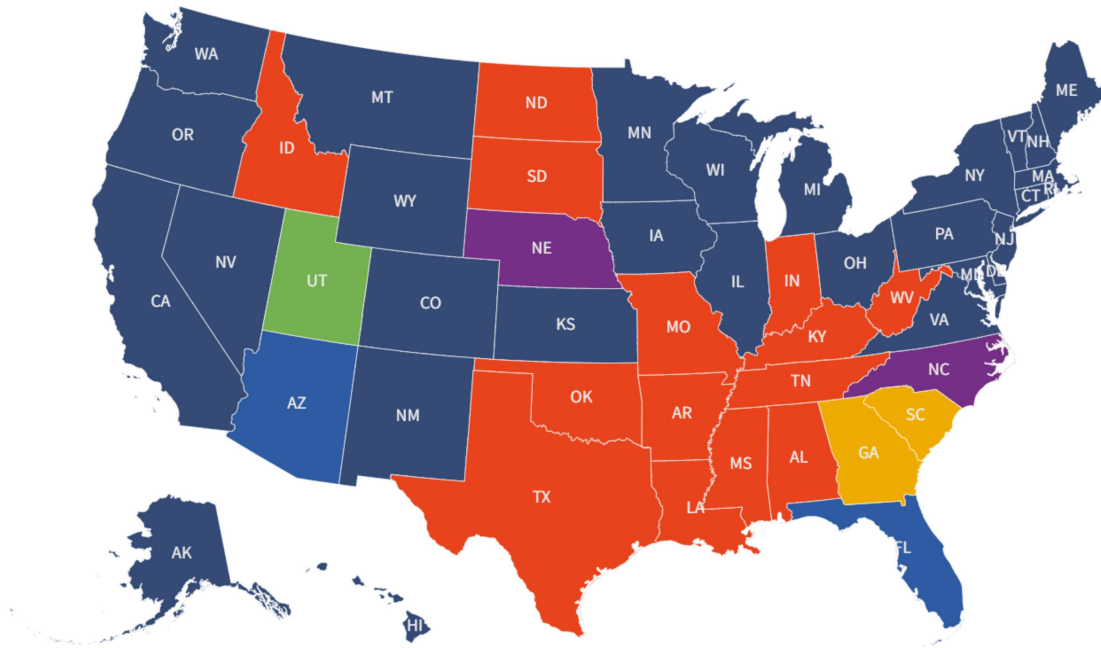
— **Barbara Shelly**, freelance journalist, [Missouri Independent](#)

THE PULSE *Reproductive rights news from across the country*

- As more states introduce laws to ban travel to states for abortion procedures, a group of Democratic lawmakers led by U.S. Rep. Deborah Ross of North Carolina are sponsoring a bill to protect individual digital data from being used by law enforcement agencies. ([NC Newsline](#))
- Maine Senate passed a bill to enshrine reproductive rights in the state constitution, but it will need more Republican support to pass the House. ([Maine Morning Star](#))
- U.S. House Minority leader Hakeem Jeffries is scheduled to visit Fort Lauderdale today to co-lead a hearing discussing reproductive freedom. ([Florida Phoenix](#))
- Maternal health advocates in Kansas called for the legislature to address maternal outcomes, particularly among Black pregnant patients and infants. ([Kansas Reflector](#))

- Amid financial and logistical hurdles, a Texas woman was forced to give birth to a baby without a skull because of the state's abortion laws. ([CNN](#))

STATE BY STATE Abortion Access in the US



[Open interactive map](#)

Did someone forward you this newsletter?

[SUBSCRIBE](#) | [LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEWSROOMS](#) | [FOLLOW](#)

©News From The States, all rights reserved.

www.newsfromthestates.com | info@newsfromthestates.com

Manage your donation and subscription preferences [here](#).

Add info@newsfromthestates.com to your [address book](#) to ensure delivery.

Did someone forward you this newsletter? [Click here](#) to get it delivered to your inbox.

News From The States is a part of [States Newsroom](#), the nation's largest nonprofit news organization dedicated to state coverage, with reporting from every state capital.

States Newsroom – News From The States
1414 Raleigh Rd #127
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
United States

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website or States Newsroom. If you believe you received this message in error or wish to change your subscription, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).