



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 17, 2022

## Three Red States Advance 15-week Abortion Bans

Three major Republican-dominated states — Florida, Arizona, and West Virginia — got closer this week to enacting legislation that would ban abortion after 15 weeks.

Republicans in the Florida House of Representatives early Thursday [approved the ban](#) ahead of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that could roll back abortion nationwide.

“This is the right to life and to give up life is unconscionable to me,” said Republican Rep. Dana Trabulsy, who disclosed that she previously had an abortion but has “regretted it everyday since.”



Vladimir Zotov/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Republicans in the Legislature moved to place the restrictions after the Supreme Court signaled it would uphold a law in Mississippi banning abortion after 15 weeks. In a case whose decision is expected later this year, the Supreme Court is anticipated to potentially overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Florida state law currently allows abortions up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. The new bill contains exceptions if abortion is necessary to save a mother’s life or prevent serious injury to the mother, or if the unborn child has a fatal abnormality.

Democrats have pressed to add additional exceptions for cases of rape, incest, and human trafficking, but Republicans have shot these down.

“As a woman it is my right to make decisions about my body and what is in the best interest of my family,” said Rep. Robin Bartleman, a Democrat. “God forbid your 11 year old is raped and pregnant and you find out after 15 weeks, you don’t get to get your daughter that abortion, that’s what this law says.”

As deliberation on the bill in the House wound down, activists in the gallery began a chant of “my body, my choice,” forcing a pause in proceedings before lawmakers cast their vote.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has previously signaled his support for the legislation, which now moves on to the Republican-controlled state Senate.

Similar legislation was [passed in the Arizona Senate](#). Democratic opponents of the bill called it unconstitutional and a violation of *Roe v. Wade*. They also argued the ban would disproportionately affect poor and minority women who don’t have the money to travel to Democratic states for abortions.

Sen. Nancy Barto, the Republican sponsor of the bill, said she hopes the high court upholds the Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks it is now weighing.

“The state has an obligation to protect life, and that is what this bill is about,” Barto said during debate. “A 15-week-old baby in the womb has a fully formed nose, lips, eyelids, they suck their thumbs. They feel pain. That’s what this bill is about.”

Arizona already has a law on the books that would automatically outlaw abortion if the Supreme Court



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overturns *Roe v. Wade*.

Republicans intend to enact the 15-week abortion ban so that it takes effect quickly, in case the Supreme Court further limits abortion but does not fully overturn *Roe v. Wade*, making the proposal similar to the Mississippi law.

Democratic Sen. Martin Quezada pushed Barto on the state of the law on Wednesday, bringing up *Roe*.

"I understand the hopes of what the Supreme Court will do from your side of the aisle," Quezada said.

"But as it stands today, right now, is this law constitutional or not?"

"I believe it is. I believe it is," Barto responded. "I believe our constitution stands clearly for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and the first part of that is life."

Quezada, who represents parts of Glendale, said that's just wrong.

"If we are waiting to see what the Supreme Court does, let's wait to see what the Supreme Court actually does before we start trying to change these laws," he said. "Otherwise, you're spinning our wheels right now."

The Associated Press noted:

Barto's bill would make it a crime for a doctor to perform an abortion after 15 weeks but would prohibit the prosecution of women for receiving one. Doctors could face felony charges and lose their license to practice medicine. There is an exception for cases when the mother is at risk of death or serious permanent injury, but not for instances of rape or incest.

Of the 13,186 abortions performed in Arizona in 2020, 636 were after 15 weeks of pregnancy, according to the latest data from the Arizona Department of Health Services.

West Virginia's bill, which [passed](#) the House of Delegates on Tuesday, makes exceptions to the 15-week rule for cases of medical emergencies or severe fetal abnormality.



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