



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on May 14, 2022

Louisiana Shelves Proposed Murder Charges for Moms Who Abort Babies

The sponsor of a bill that would have made Louisiana women subject to homicide charges for aborting their unborn children walked back the proposal, [pulling it from debate](#) Thursday night after members of the state House voted 65-26 to completely revamp the legislation, eliminating those penalties.

The bill would have gone further against abortion than policy in any other state.

“This is a thorny political question, but we all know that it is actually very simple. Abortion is murder,” said Rep. Danny McCormick, an Oil City Republican. He noted that most of the lawmakers in the state’s majority-Republican legislature say they oppose abortion and scolded them for opposing his bill.

“We’re faltering and trying to explain it away,” McCormick said.

Prominent Louisiana political figures known for being “pro-life” strongly opposed McCormick’s measure. Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat who claims to be against abortion, said he would veto it. Even organizations like Louisiana Right to Life, the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Right to Life Committee opposed the measure.

Edwards, a practicing Catholic, called the legislation “absurd.”

McCormick was fervent in defending his proposal, arguing that a woman who has her child killed prior to birth should be held in the same legal position as a woman who kills her child after birth.

“When I give equal protection to the unborn, that’s the possibility,” he said in a Wednesday evening phone interview with the Associated Press.

The bill’s supporters were just as devoted, gathering around the Capitol to pray and show support. One supporter shouted “Shame” from the House balcony as the bill was pulled.

On Thursday, before debate began, the building was temporarily evacuated after the speaker interrupted proceedings and said an unknown, unclaimed package had been found in the Capitol’s Memorial Hall — a gathering area between the House and Senate Chambers.

That came as the legislation was already moving slowly amid an attempt to find a compromise on McCormick’s bill. The House took a recess of over an hour as legislators broke off into closed-door groups to discuss the legislation.

AP notes:



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Pending at the time was the amendment by Rep. Alan Seabaugh. The Shreveport Republican is an anti-abortion stalwart. But his amendment overhauled McCormick's bill, declaring that women would not face criminal penalties for abortion. It also allowed abortion to save the life of a pregnant woman. And it eliminated language in McCormick's original bill that appeared to make contraceptive drugs and at least some aspects of in vitro fertilization illegal.

The amendment also stripped language from McCormick's bill widely regarded as blatantly unconstitutional — a declaration that any federal law, regulation or court ruling that allows abortion is void and that any judge who blocks enforcement of the bill's provisions could be impeached.

"We can't grant ourselves the power to order a court to rule future acts unconstitutional," Seabaugh said.

The amendment is similar to a Senate bill that seeks to tighten up the state's abortion laws if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. This Senate version still has the possibility of advancing.

Louisiana currently has laws on the books criminalizing abortion, including a "trigger law" that would make sure abortion is a crime if the Supreme Court reverses *Roe v. Wade*. The current statutes appear to exempt women from prosecution.

This comes as a [leaked Supreme Court majority opinion](#) that Chief Justice John Roberts confirmed to be authentic suggests *Roe* will be overturned.

The majority opinion, authored by Justice Samuel Alito, reads:

We hold that *Roe* and *Casey* must be overruled. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including the one on which the defenders of *Roe* and *Casey* now chiefly rely—the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The justices concluded:

It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives. "The permissibility of abortion, and the limitations, upon it, are to be resolved like most important questions in our democracy: by citizens trying to persuade one another and then voting."

The Louisiana bill raises an important question in the abortion debate. While opponents of abortion who champion the sanctity of life often equate abortion with murder, many are unwilling to take that definition to its logical conclusion. If abortion is murder, why wouldn't the mothers who willingly take their unborn children to be killed be held legally accountable for their role in the murder?



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