



Written by [Lisa Shaw](#) on May 24, 2016

Oklahoma's "Pro-life" Governor Vetoes Anti-abortion Bill

In Oklahoma on March 8, Senate Bill 1552, banning abortions in the state, passed overwhelmingly in the Senate with a vote of 40-7. The measure then passed in the House on April 21, 59-9, after a change was made regarding its language. It then went back to the Senate for approval and passed once again on May 19, 33-12.



S.B. 1552, authored by Senator Nathan Dahm, (R-Broken Arrow), would make it a felony for doctors to perform abortions, except when the mother's life is threatened. According to the official [website](#) of Oklahoma's state legislature, this law would consider abortion "unprofessional conduct" and would revoke or prohibit the licensing, or renewal of a license, to doctors performing the procedure. It could also result in a punishment of up to three years in prison for those doctors who choose not to comply.

The 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, from which this bill derives its authority, states, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

In an interview with *The New American*, Paul Blair — pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, founder of Protect Life and Marriage OK, and a candidate for the Oklahoma state senate — explained:

Among those powers reserved to the states are the standards for licensing doctors to practice medicine within the borders of each state. Medical licensing is clearly a "state" issue. There is no such thing as a Federal Doctor's License. Each state is free to determine standards of behavior.

Since doctors take an oath to intentionally do no harm to a patient, it is reasonable for the Oklahoma Legislature to expect and insist that Doctors honor that oath and do no intentional harm either to mother or child.

After passing in the Senate, S.B. 1552 had only to await the approval of Oklahoma's Republican governor, Mary Fallin (shown).

However, in a shocking turn of events, the state's self proclaimed pro-life governor vetoed the measure, claiming that it was unclear and lacked the ability to effectively end abortion. "The bill is so ambiguous and vague that doctors cannot be certain what medical circumstances would be considered 'necessary to preserve the life of the mother,'" Fallin said in a statement. She added that she instead supports a "re-examination" of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court allowing women the "right"



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to an abortion. “In fact,” said Fallin, “the most direct path to a re-examination of the United States Supreme Court’s ruling in *Roe v. Wade* is the appointment of a conservative, pro-life justice to the United States Supreme Court.”

As perplexing as it is to the general public that a “pro-life” governor dismissed the opportunity to, for the most part, end abortion in her state, it is even more perplexing to a smaller segment of Oklahoma’s population that was convinced of her approval. Governor Fallin was not only made aware of the intent of this bill in October of last year, but was also in favor of it at the time. A statement released by Protect Life and Marriage OK reveals,

[A nationally renowned attorney], along with a group of pastors and legislators, met personally with Fallin last year in an hour long meeting in her board room at 10 am on October 8, 2015. The meeting was a success as the purpose was to inform the governor of this strategy and secure her promised support if the bill got to her desk.

To further underline Governor Fallin’s about-face, a previous statement from Blair — issued before Fallin vetoed the bill — noted, “Governor Fallin prides herself as being 100% pro-life and has promised when running for office that she would sign all pro-life bills that come across her desk. We expect her to be a woman of her word.”

As S.B. 1552 is clearly a “pro-life bill,” the assumption that Governor Mary Fallin is a “woman of her word” would seem to lose strength.

Regarding Governor Fallin’s assertion of the ineffectiveness of this bill, one wonders why she chose to outright veto it, instead of proposing changes to make it more acceptable. In fact, not only did she not propose any changes, she refused to discuss suggested changes that were brought to her.

Blair took the bill and Governor Fallin’s press release to Liberty Counsel to seek advice on its vagueness. He was told by the legal team that it was not vague; however, they revised the wording to make it possibly more palatable to the governor. Blair then took the revision to Senator Dahm, Representative David Brumbaugh, Representative Dan Fisher, Senator Joseph Silk, and others, who then tried repeatedly on Monday to contact Governor Fallin, only to be told by her office that she was “too busy working on the budget to discuss the bill.”

This is strange behavior from a pro-life governor who claims she vetoed the bill only because it would not stand up to legal challenges. Protect Life and Marriage OK noted that

Governor Fallin has signed numerous bills in the past which have been struck down by the courts. It is interesting that she has suddenly anointed herself a Constitutional scholar in time to veto this bill. A number of attorneys were so excited about the constitutionality of this new approach using the Tenth Amendment, they were willing to defend Oklahoma in court for free.

One such attorney, who has argued before the nation’s highest court, and who also participated in the meeting with Governor Fallin last year, is Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. Scrutinizing the governor’s apparent duplicity, Staver stated,

As one who proclaims to be pro-life, her actions run counter to her words. This is a despicable betrayal of her word and of innocent children whose lives will be cut short because of her cowardly act. I encourage the Oklahoma legislators to veto the governor and Liberty Counsel stands ready to defend this bill.

That Oklahoma’s legislators will try to override Governor Fallin’s veto is hopeful, but uncertain. Senator



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Dahm noted the possible apprehensions of some who initially voted in favor of the bill: “Sometimes people, even if they voted for the bill, are hesitant to vote to override the governor’s veto because of their concern about the governor being petty and vindictive and vetoing some of their legislation.”

However, this could be the moment for Oklahoma’s pro-life legislators to allow their moral convictions to override their personal trepidations. As this bill to end abortion in the state of Oklahoma hangs in the balance, so does the opening of the first new abortion clinic in the Sooner State since 1974. Not since one year after *Roe v. Wade* has a new abortion facility entered Oklahoma, and there are currently only two operating statewide.

Julie Burkhart, CEO of Trust Women and owner of South Wind Women’s Center in Wichita, Kansas, is in the process of bringing abortion services back to Oklahoma City. Concerning S.B. 1552, she told *Rolling Stone* on May 20,

We are waiting to see what Gov. Fallin does. She hasn’t vetoed any anti-choice legislation that I know of. Even if she did veto it, the legislature can easily override it, so I don’t see how it doesn’t go into law. But our approach is to wait and see where this goes.

As Burkhart is waiting for her opportunity to pounce on this metropolitan area, will the legislature, indeed, override this veto?

As Michael Sawyer, Oklahoma field coordinator for The John Birch Society — a constitutionalist organization well known for its pro-life stance, and the parent organization of this magazine — told *The New American*, “This is a perfect storm for ending abortion in Oklahoma. Any legislator who wants to be seen as truly pro-life has a golden opportunity by overriding Governor Fallin’s veto. Those who don’t will be telling us all something about themselves.”

Whether or not Oklahoma’s legislature will stand without Governor Fallin’s support at this pivotal point in history remains to be seen. However, this statement from Protect Life and Marriage OK should be considered: “Governor Fallin had the chance to be the Governor who brought down abortion. All she had to do was sign this overwhelmingly popular bill and then let Liberty Counsel defend it in court. It would have cost the state nothing to try. Legislators are now left to consider a veto override. Six thousand babies will die this year. Their blood is on the Governor’s hands.”

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