



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on November 10, 2023

After Ohio, Abortion Lobby Sets Sights on Florida

Can Florida buck the current political trends and remain a bastion of conservatism?

On the heels of the elections on Tuesday, the pro-abortion movement feels invigorated, confident that it has a path to nationwide victory via implementation of the kind of strategy it used to great effect in Ohio — spend lots of money to get a misleading amendment on the ballot and then spend even more money to sell it to the public.

Florida in recent years, under the work of Gov. Ron DeSantis and a Republican supermajority in both houses of the state Legislature, has become an epicenter of conservative politics. But just as the Left succeeded in getting a right to abortion enshrined in Ohio's constitution despite it being a red state, they hope to do the same in Florida and other states.



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Yet when it comes to the Sunshine State, the Left may be biting off more than they can chew.

As [Politico](#) notes, John Morgan, the wealthy trial attorney and founder of the prominent Orlando-based firm Morgan & Morgan, has played a major role in the success of numerous Democrat-loved ballot initiatives. He personally spent millions on the successful efforts to legalize medical marijuana and the \$15 minimum wage.

But even Morgan won't touch the effort to create an abortion right of up to 24 weeks in Florida.

"I am pro-choice but this is not my fight," he told *Politico* via email.

Florida has been on a pro-life trajectory in recent years. Prior to the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, the Legislature passed and DeSantis signed a 15-week abortion ban without exceptions for rape and incest. In the aftermath of *Roe's* overturn, Florida passed a six-week abortion ban this year.

If Democrats want abortion on the ballot in the 2024 general election, they have to gather the required 891,523 signatures by Feb. 1.

Politico reported on the progress of the pro-abortion movement in Florida, which while well-funded, falls far short of the kind of war chest the Left had in Ohio:

Floridians Protecting Freedom, the main group organizing the initiative, has raised almost \$9 million as of the end of September, though the group says it's taken in at least \$12 million (which will be reflected in the next fundraising report). The vast majority of the other contributions were from people who gave between \$1 and \$250,000. But the group's leaders say 80 percent of the contributions came from in-state donors — sparking worries that big donors from out-of-state and national groups are dismissing Florida.



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By comparison, Ohio's Issue 1, the initiative enshrining abortion rights in that state's Constitution, raised more than \$28 million, including close to \$13 million from groups based in New York, Washington, D.C., and even Tulsa, Okla.

Thus far, Floridians Protecting Freedom has reportedly gotten 500,000 valid signatures. If it gets on the ballot, the amendment would need 60 percent support to pass.

Ballot initiatives in Florida are expensive, particularly because the Legislature tightened the rules on petition gathering and signature verification. An effort to get recreational marijuana on the ballot next year has already spent \$39 million — most of that spent on gathering signatures. Meanwhile, Morgan's medical marijuana effort spent about \$14 million, per state records.

Anna Hochkammer, who works as the executive director of the coalition behind Florida's pro-abortion initiative, has high hopes after Tuesday's victory in Ohio.

"The reason why Ohio's result is really giving some wind underneath our waves down here in Florida is not only did you have a conservative state with a well-funded Republican infrastructure," she said, "you're starting to see voting patterns that this is not a particularly partisan issue — it's a bipartisan issue."

Hochkammer further claimed that her group has received major donations, such as \$1.1 million from a Palm Beach philanthropist and \$500,000 check from the New York-based Open Society Fund.

"We're talking about people who were adding five zeros are now adding six," she said. "The focus is now coming to Florida."

The effort poses a threat to the pro-life gains Florida has made. But conservatives in the state have some reason to hope. The reluctance of some big donors, such as Morgan and out-of-state givers, to contribute to the abortion cause may be a warning that those with financial skin in the game aren't so confident of their ability to pull off a win in the Sunshine State as they were in Ohio.

The overwhelmingly successful reelection campaign of DeSantis, the Republican supermajorities in the Legislature, and the growth of Republican support in once firmly Democratic strongholds such as Miami-Dade all suggest that Florida is becoming increasingly conservative in its demographic makeup.

In part, this is the result of the strong conservative stance taken by state Republicans in recent years, particularly amid Covid-19; as Florida has gained a reputation as a conservative stronghold, this reputation has attracted more conservative migration from other states.

Ultimately, the abortion battle is sure to be hard-fought. Will Florida maintain its unique status, or will it fall to the abortion lobby?



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