



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 3, 2018

Iowa Legislature Passes Bill Banning Abortion After Heartbeat Detection

In the wee hours of Wednesday, the Iowa legislature passed a bill that would ban abortion once an unborn baby's heartbeat is detected, a measure that would become the most restrictive in the nation if signed by Governor Kim Reynolds (R).

According to the [Des Moines Register](#), "The bill requires physicians to conduct an abdominal ultrasound to test for a fetal heartbeat on any woman seeking an abortion. If that heartbeat is detected, a physician cannot perform an abortion." That means, in essence, that abortion after the sixth week of pregnancy would be prohibited; Iowa already bans abortion after the 20th week.



"A baby has become something we can throw away. This bill says it's time to change the way we think about unborn life," [said](#) Representative Sandy Salmon (R-Janesville).

Getting the bill passed wasn't easy. The Senate approved similar legislation earlier this year, but it stalled in the House of Representatives. "In an effort to force the House into action, Sen. Rick Bertrand, (R-Sioux City), said a group of Republican senators had threatened to withhold their votes on critical budget bills needed to end the 2018 legislative session," reported the *Register*.

With some rape and incest exceptions added to the bill, the House approved it around 11 p.m. Tuesday; all Democrats and six Republicans voted against it. About three hours later, the Senate passed it in a party-line vote.

The bill now heads to Reynolds' desk. While declaring herself "proud to be pro-life," Reynolds declined to state whether she would sign the measure, saying she would have to "review it" before making a decision.

U.S. Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), who is sponsoring similar legislation at the federal level, praised his counterparts in Des Moines. "With their votes, the Iowa legislature has heroically placed our state in the forefront of efforts to protect innocent, unborn life from the abortionists," King said in a [statement](#). "It was a deeply moral and principled vote, and it reflects our shared Iowa values by ensuring that if a heartbeat is detected, the baby must be protected. Gov. Reynolds is the most pro-life governor in Iowa's history and I have confidence in her and I anticipate this bill will become law."

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"Democrats throughout the process called the legislation 'frightening,' 'extreme' and 'unconstitutional,'" wrote the *Register*. Some expressed concern that while the bill grants women legal immunity, it does not do so for doctors, potentially setting them up for murder charges if they violate it. Representative Chip Baltimore (R-



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Boone) countered that since the bill does not designate an unborn baby a “person,” an illegal abortion could not be prosecuted as a homicide.

Should Reynolds sign the bill, it will almost certainly be challenged in federal court, where the case would likely end up before the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. That court reluctantly struck down comparable 2013 North Dakota and Arkansas laws, citing Supreme Court precedent; the high court then declined to hear appeals of those cases. Today, 10 of the 11 judges on the circuit court are Republican appointees, which could portend a different outcome.

Some of the bill’s backers relish the thought of a court battle. “This law, if signed, I believe could very well be the very bill that overturns *Roe v. Wade*,” said Senator Jake Chapman (R-Adel).

Democrats, meanwhile, developed a newfound zeal for conserving taxpayer dollars. Senator Matt McCoy (D-Des Moines) criticized Republicans for passing a bill that, like the North Dakota and Arkansas laws, would likely be struck down “after extensive and expensive lawsuits.”

Even Planned Parenthood, which soaks taxpayers for millions every year, fretted about the matter. In a statement, Planned Parenthood of the Heartland spokeswoman Erin Davison-Rippey said Iowa Republicans “do not care how much taxpayer money will be spent on a lawsuit ... or how many families may choose to go elsewhere because Iowa is no longer a state where they are safe to live and work.”

Yes, you read that correctly: In the opinion of Planned Parenthood, prohibiting the killing of human beings will make Iowa unsafe for families.

In truth, upholding the value of human life, whether in or out of the womb, will make Iowa a more hospitable place for everyone — except those who profit from the destruction of the unborn.



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