



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 25, 2020

Planned Parenthood, ACLU File Lawsuit Against Iowa's Pro-life "Informed Consent" Bill

Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union have filed suit against a pro-life "Informed Consent" bill passed earlier this month by the Iowa legislature that requires mothers to wait at least 24 hours after their initial appointment before obtaining an abortion and mandates mothers to have an ultrasound and receive adoption information before they may proceed with an abortion.



The measure was passed as an amendment to another bill in the final hours of Iowa's 2020 legislative session and is set to take effect starting July 1, though the bill has not yet been signed by Governor Kim Reynolds, a strong pro-life advocate.

State Representative Sandy Salmon (R-Janesville) said the bill is a "big step" toward protecting unborn babies' lives in Iowa.

"Waiting periods help ensure that decisions are made not under duress and not under undue influences. It's the hope that after taking time to consider it, a woman would choose life over death," Salmon said.

Proponents of the bill assert the state requires waiting periods for other major life decisions, including marriage, divorce, and adoptions.

Likewise, the landmark 1992 Supreme Court ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* determined that a 24-hour waiting period did not pose an undue burden on a woman's right to an abortion and that a waiting period "rationally furthers the State's legitimate interest in maternal health and in unborn life."

But Planned Parenthood takes issue with the waiting period, and claims the law creates "arbitrary barriers" to abortion.

"We at Planned Parenthood see firsthand the burden on our patients when politicians create arbitrary barriers to safe, legal abortion, like this new waiting period," [complained](#) Erin Davison-Rippey, Iowa executive director for Planned Parenthood North Central States. "This law is really about shaming Iowans and making it harder to access abortion."

Davison-Rippey also begrudged the bill's mandatory initial appointment/counseling session, at which time women would be given the opportunity to view an ultrasound and receive information about abortion alternatives, Iowa Public Radio reports.

"The requirement of a medically unnecessary appointment prior to their abortion — which I want to note is particularly egregious in the midst of a global pandemic — it's an enormous hurdle for people who have already made their decision to have an abortion," said Davison-Rippey.

Yet Iowa's requirement is not unusual. The Guttmacher Institute reports 27 states currently require women to undergo waiting periods, most of which are 24 hours, before obtaining an abortion. And 34 states require women receive counseling prior to an abortion, 29 of which detail the information women



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are required to receive.

And laws such as Iowa's have proven to be effective in saving unborn babies from abortions.

A 2017 [study](#) from the University of California, San Francisco, revealed that Utah's 72-hour waiting period and required counseling sessions prior to an abortion did have an impact on women seeking an abortion. Researchers studied 500 women who sought an initial appointment at an abortion clinic and found that eight percent of the 500 women were less certain of their decision to abort as a result of the counseling sessions and waiting period. And as noted by Life News, "other reports by the same authors using the same data" revealed 11 percent of the women in the study were still pregnant during their three-week follow-up, most of whom indicated they were no longer seeking an abortion. What's more, of the 500 women who started the study, just 309 completed a follow-up, prompting Life News to suggest that it's possible that even more women changed their minds.

Ultrasound requirements have also proven effective at saving unborn lives. According to Focus on the Family, a Christian organization based in Colorado Springs that provides grants to pregnancy centers for ultrasound machines, an estimated 229,500 babies have been [saved](#) since the organization implemented its ultrasound program in 2004. A 2012 [study](#) by the University of California, San Francisco, in which researchers interviewed 20 women who received an ultrasound ahead of their abortions found that there is indeed support to claims that ultrasound viewing can dissuade women from abortion.

The lawsuit claims the bill violates due process and equal protection clauses of the Iowa Constitution. It also argues that the bill should not have been attached to an unrelated bill focused on the withdrawal of a life-sustaining procedure from a minor, and should not have been rushed into the final moments of the legislative session.

As observed by the *Des Moines Register*, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU have successfully defeated abortion-related waiting periods in the past, but those have largely been 72-hour waiting periods, including in Iowa, where the Supreme Court tossed out a 72-hour waiting period requirement passed by the Iowa legislature in 2018. However, Governor Reynolds has appointed four State Supreme Court justices since then, giving lawmakers hope that their bill will be upheld.

"With a different makeup of the court, there's hope that there might be different outcomes," Salmon said Tuesday.

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Raven Clabough acquired her bachelor's and master's degrees in English at the University of Albany in upstate New York. She currently lives in Pennsylvania and has been a writer for The New American since 2010.



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