



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 21, 2018

Ohio GOP Introduces Bill Banning All Abortions

On Tuesday, two Republicans in Ohio's House of Representatives — Ron Hood and Nino Vitale — introduced a [bill](#) that would ban all abortions statewide, in all stages of pregnancy. The measure is believed to be largely symbolic, as it has a limited chance of passing.

HB 565 defines an "unborn human" as a person under Ohio's criminal code and would allow criminal charges to be brought against a woman who attempts to have an abortion, as well as doctors. Under the bill, abortions could be punishable by life in prison, and even the death penalty.

The Ohio affiliate of NARAL, the pro-abortion group, predictably voiced its immediate opposition to the bill. "Anti-choice extremists from the Ohio Statehouse to the White House are lining up their dominoes to topple *Roe v. Wade* and punish those who seek or provide abortion care," read a statement from NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio executive director Kellie Copeland.

And while the bill's sponsors understand the measure is unlikely to pass, they are hopeful it will "get the word out that life does begin at conception and move the debate in that direction."

Hood is hopeful that if the bill is found unconstitutional by a federal court, it can be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider abortion access. "Obviously, *Roe v. Wade* could be revisited," he said.

Vitale contends that the bill would not only save the lives of unborn children but also save would-be mothers from the regret of abortion, stating that many women who conceive in rape and abort the child later regret that abortion. "Life isn't always giving us things by our choice and I don't want to put a woman through a second trauma after she's been through such an awful first one," Vitale said.

Still, it's not clear that the bill would even pass the GOP-controlled legislature, as just 20 House Republicans have signed onto the bill — less than a third of the majority.

And even if the bill managed to pass, it's possible Republican Governor John Kasich would veto it. In 2016, Kasich vetoed a bill that would have banned abortions after a fetal heartbeat was detected, claiming he was concerned about the money the state would have to spend to defend a bill that would ultimately be ruled unconstitutional. According to WOSU Public Media, the ACLU has sued the state of Ohio four times in recent years over abortion laws, including one signed in December by Governor Kasich that banned eugenic abortion of unborn children with Down syndrome. *The Hill* reports that measure has been ruled unconstitutional by Southern District of Ohio Judge Timothy Black, who said that federal abortion law is "crystal clear" that "a State may not prohibit any woman from making the ultimate decision to terminate her pregnancy before viability."

A wide-ranging estimate by Ohio's Legislative Service Commission states that Ohio could spend several thousand to several million dollars defending its abortion legislation, based on an analysis of what other states have spent.





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According to the *Washington Examiner*, Ohio has passed 20 abortion restrictions since 2011.

Not all of Ohio's efforts to restrict abortions have failed, however. A ban on abortions after 20 weeks remains in effect since 2017.

Other states are also attempting to place tighter restrictions on abortions. Kentucky lawmakers are considering a ban similar to Ohio's, and earlier this week, Mississippi's governor signed into law a bill that bans the procedure after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with few exceptions, making it one of the most restrictive laws in the nation. That law has already been temporarily blocked by a federal judge after the state's only abortion clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, immediately sued the state, the *Washington Post* reports.

On Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves heard arguments before granting the clinic's request for a temporary restraining order that would block the law while it undergoes a legal challenge. "The Supreme Court says every woman has a constitutional right to 'personal privacy' regarding her body," Reeves wrote in a brief decision. "That right protects her choice 'to have an abortion before viability.' States cannot 'prohibit any woman from making the ultimate decision' to do so."

Iowa has advanced legislation to ban most abortions after a fetal heartbeat could be detected, according to the *Des Moines Register*.

Image: [Screenshot from Ohio Right to Life site](#)



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