



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 23, 2022

Wisconsin Senate Ends Special Session to Reconsider State's Abortion Ban — in Fourteen Seconds

On Wednesday, Wisconsin legislators opened a special session called by Governor Tony Evers, a Democrat, to reconsider the state's ban on abortion. Fourteen seconds into the session, Republican State Senator Chris Kapenga ended the session with a bang of his gavel, despite the call of "Objection" by Democrat Tim Carpenter.

Wisconsin's ban on abortion, except where the mother's life is at stake, goes back to 1849, almost to the very founding of the state. Only the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 legally allowed abortions in the Badger State. A recent leaked opinion indicates that the Supreme Court may overturn *Roe v. Wade* as early as this week, thereby making most abortion illegal in Wisconsin.



DC_Colombia/iStock/Getty Images Plus
Wisconsin State Capitol

Kapenga called Evers' call for a special session, which he asked for on June 8, a "political stunt."

"The United States Supreme Court has yet to issue their opinion, yet the Governor called a Special Session. This is nothing more than a calculated campaign move and the exact reason why the Legislature isn't in session during campaign season. He's not fooling anyone with this disingenuous political stunt," Kapenga, the president of the Wisconsin Senate, said in a [statement](#).

"The Governor announced this Special Session in Milwaukee two weeks ago. If only the Governor could have mustered up some leadership to address the increased crime plaguing our cities. He needs to do better for the people of Wisconsin who are concerned about the safety of their loved ones," Kapenga added.

Governor Evers was understandably upset by the quick special session.

"I'm disappointed that legislators did not repeal Wisconsin's 1849 anti-abortion law today. Their refusal to act will have damaging effects on our community and access to inclusive reproductive healthcare," Evers [tweeted](#).

"Reproductive healthcare is a personal decision that shouldn't be determined by any politician. But this fight doesn't end here. As long as I'm governor, I'll keep supporting the right to an abortion and veto any legislation that threatens access to reproductive healthcare," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu [blasted](#) what he called Evers' and Democrats' "extreme" views on abortion.

"Governor Evers and modern Democrats hold an extreme and abhorrent view on the taking of innocent life. If Tony Evers had his way, babies would be allowed to be killed up until the moment of birth," said



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LeMahieu. "His views are so extreme, he twice vetoed our 'Born Alive' bill which would require a doctor to offer life-saving treatment to a baby who survives a botched abortion."

Evers vetoed the born-alive treatment bill along with several other anti-abortion measures in December of 2021.

Outside the Capitol, a crowd described as "dozens," wearing pink shirts that proclaimed "I stand with Planned Parenthood" and "Bans Off Our Bodies," chanted time-worn slogans such as "Not the church, not the state, only we decide our fate!"

Pro-abortion forces vowed to fight on for the right to kill babies in utero. Despite long odds in the Wisconsin State Senate — Republicans hold a large majority of 21-12 — Democratic Minority Leader Greta Neubauer claimed that the fight had just begun.

"No matter what happens in the coming days, we are not backing down," she said prior to the brief session. "Our movement has been building for decades, and now is our most important moment. We are at a crossroads in Wisconsin."

Abortion proponents have another ally in Wisconsin's Attorney General Josh Kaul, who is also a Democrat. Kaul has vowed not to prosecute doctors who perform abortions should *Roe* be overturned, and believes that the 1849 law is too antiquated to be enforced. He came out in full support of repealing the law prior to the fourteen-second special session.

"By repealing Wisconsin's extreme, 19th century abortion ban, the legislature can protect women's health. It can ensure that women don't lose the freedom to make fundamental decisions about their lives," he said in a statement.

Planned Parenthood, which operates three abortion clinics in the state, has stopped scheduling abortions beyond June 25. Other abortion providers in the state have, reportedly, also stopped scheduling abortions going forward in anticipation of the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*.

Democrats have held the Legislature and governor's office several times since the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, yet neglected to codify abortion in the state during those times.

Perhaps more than anything, this Wisconsin flap over abortion shows us just how important local and state politics are in the United States. If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned as expected, Wisconsin, a state which leans very leftist in several other areas, will have a nearly complete ban on abortion already in place.



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