

Operation Wildfire: Good Things Happen When YOU Vote

June 28, 2002

Issue 16

Abortion

The U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade now leaves it up to individual states to determine the rules regarding abortion services.

Unlike 13 other states, Pennsylvania does not have a law that automatically restricts or completely bans abortions once this landmark court decision was overturned. Current Pennsylvania law allows an abortion to be performed up to the 24th week of pregnancy or later if the life of the mother is at risk and minors must have parental consent.

There are, however, a dozen pieces of legislation that have been introduced this legislative session that seek to protect or alter the current law. Here are the measures sitting in the hopper in the State Senate and State House of Representatives awaiting action in the current legislative session that ends November 30 as well as their current status:

Anti-abortion Bills

Senate Bill 378 – Sen. Doug Mastriano, R-Franklin County

This bill bans abortions if a fetal heartbeat is detected unless determined by a physician to be clinically necessary. Status: In Senate Health and Human Services Committee

House Bill 904 – Rep. Stephanie Borowicz, R-Clinton County

This bill bans abortions if a fetal heartbeat is detected unless determined by a physician to be clinically necessary. Status: Passed House Health Committee and awaiting action by the full House of Representatives.

House Bill 1500 – Rep. Kate Klunk, R-York County

This bill bans abortions because of a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Status: Passed the House by a 120-83 vote and is now before the full Senate.

Senate Bill 21 – Sen. Scott Martin, R-Lancaster County

This bill bans abortions based on a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Status: In Senate Health and Human Services Committee

House Bill 2252 – Rep. Donna Oberlander, R-Clarion County

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment banning public funding of elective abortions and prevents the courts from changing state abortion laws. Status: In House Health Committee

Senate Bill 956 – Sen. Judy Ward, R-Blair County

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment banning public funding of elective abortions and prevents the courts from changing state abortion laws. Status: Passed Senate Health and Human Services Committee and is now before the full Senate. Visit www.operationwildfire.org to learn more about this proposed constitutional amendment.

Senate Bill 152 – Sen. Judy Ward, R-Blair County

This bill prioritizes public funds for family planning services to private hospitals and community health centers over “unconventional” health care providers such as Planned Parenthood. Status: Passed Senate Health and Human Services Committee and is now before the full Senate.

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Pro-abortion Rights Bills

House Bill 2626 – Sponsor: Rep. Melissa Shusterman, D-Chester County

This bill bans public funding of family planning organizations that engage in practices that prevent women from having abortions to ensure that remains an option to meet women's health needs. Status: In House Health Committee

House Bill 2629 – Sponsor: Rep. Melissa Shusterman, D-Chester County

This bill allows public funding of abortions. Status: In House Health Committee

House Bill 2628 – Sponsor: Rep. Melissa Shusterman, D-Chester County

This bill removes restrictions on public funds for abortions and related activities. Status: In House Health Committee

House Bill 2627 – Sponsor: Rep. Melissa Shusterman, D-Chester County

This bill allocates money to the Department of Human Services for family planning providers including those that provide abortion services. Status: Referred to House Health Committee

House Bill 733 – Sponsor: Rep. Kristine Howard, D-Chester County

This bill bars any state laws or regulations from interfering with an individual's right to have an abortion. Status: Referred to House Health Committee

What's Next?

The bills that seek to further limit access to abortion stand no chance of getting past Gov. Tom Wolf's veto. However, moving them to his desk would send a message to voters about where individual lawmakers stand on the issue going forward.

Gov. Wolf vetoed a bill in 2019 that resembles legislation offered in both chambers banning abortions based on a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Wolf is term-limited and constitutionally barred from seeking another term when his time in office expires in January. But the two major party gubernatorial candidates vying to succeed him have divergent views on this issue.

Gov. Wolf has a strong position on abortion but, as noted, he is term limited. At this time, neither political party has a lock on the Pennsylvania Governor's race. That's why it's extremely important for you to get to the polls and vote on Tuesday, November 8 for that candidate who most closely aligns with your beliefs on this important issue.

What Can You Do?

It's time to make your voice heard! Call or email your representatives in Harrisburg and voice your opinion.

Senator Jake Corman

Telephone: (814) 355-0477 and (717) 787-1377

Email: <https://www.senatorcorman.com/contact/>

If you don't reside in Centre County but do live in Pennsylvania, find your State Senator here:

https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/mbrList.cfm?body=S&sort=alpha

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Representative Stephanie Borowicz – District 76
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Representative Scott Conklin – District 77
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Representative Rich Irvin – District 81
Telephone: (814) 692-4577 and (717) 787-3335
Email: <https://www.repirvin.com/Contact>

If you don't reside in Centre County but do live in Pennsylvania, find your State Representative here:
https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/mbrList.cfm?body=H

After you've made your calls and sent your emails:

- Consider writing a Letter to the Editor to express your views.
- Call your local radio talk show to discuss the recent Supreme Court ruling and pending PA legislation.
- Select a candidate that shares your views and volunteer for his or her campaign.
- Ensure that your voter registration information is current.
- Traveling on Election Day? Be sure to apply for an Absentee Ballot.
- Start now and make a plan to vote on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

And, remember, the media is reporting lots of misinformation about this landmark decision. Please know that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade now leaves it up to the states to determine the rules regarding abortion services. Pennsylvania does not have a law that automatically restricts or completely bans abortions once this landmark court decision was overturned.

A Note from the Wildfire Team

If the information from Wildfire has been helpful/useful to you, please pass it along to others or let us know who to add to our email list.

We love feedback and we love support. Consider sending a donation in any amount to:

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Sources: *PennLive.com, Legislate*