

Alabama Bans Abortions After 20 Weeks of Pregnancy



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Pro-life groups are celebrating another legislative victory at the state level.

On the final day of the legislative session, Alabama lawmakers approved a bill Thursday that makes it illegal for a woman to have an abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Current state law allows abortions up to the stage of fetal viability, which is usually 24 weeks. The change had been strongly advocated by pro-life groups.

Under the measure, abortions won't be allowed after 20 weeks of gestation, the point when some researchers believe an unborn child can feel pain.

"State legislatures are stepping up to protect these children, thus reflecting the majority wishes of their constituents," said Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D., director of state legislation for the National Right to Life Committee.

Alabama joins five other states to pass "pain-capable" legislation.

If signed into law by Republican Gov. Robert Bentley, the measure would make it a felony to perform an abortion after 20 weeks unless the woman's pregnancy puts her at risk of death or substantial harm.

There are no exceptions for cases of rape or incest.