

Rick Perry's Texas Government Bans Abortions After 20 Weeks

The Republican-controlled Texas House of Representatives approved on Monday sweeping restrictions on **abortions**, including a ban on most after 20 weeks of pregnancy and stricter standards for abortion clinics.

If the bill becomes law, Texas could become the 13th state to pass a 20-week ban and would have some of the toughest abortion restrictions in the country.

Supporters says the bill is needed to protect women's health and to keep fetuses from feeling pain. Opponents say it will cause nearly all the state's abortion clinics to close or be completely rebuilt.

"Sadly, too often today the back-alley abortion is the abortion clinic because the standards for providers and the facilities are too lax or substandard," the measure's House sponsor, Representative Jodie Laubenberg, told colleagues early Monday. "This bill will assure that women are given the highest standard of healthcare."

State Representative Senfronia Thompson, a Democrat, waved a coat hanger on the floor of the House, warning that such objects would be used to perform abortions if the measure became law.

"There are going to be more people ending up in the hospital DOA (dead on arrival) for trying to do the abortions themselves," Thompson said during the debate.

The vote was 95-34, mostly along party lines. The House gave the measure preliminary approval earlier on Monday by a vote of 97-33. The measure now returns to the Senate, which has passed a version of the bill that does not include a 20-week

ban.

Republicans are racing to send the measure to Governor Rick Perry, who supports restricting abortion, before the current special legislative session ends on Tuesday..

The U.S. Supreme Court legalized **abortion** nationwide in 1973, but conservative states have enacted laws in recent years that seek to place restrictions on the procedure, especially on abortions performed late in pregnancy.

Twelve states have passed 20-week bans, including two states where the bans take effect later this year, according to the Center for Reproductive Rights. Courts have blocked the bans in three of the 12 states—Arizona, Georgia and Idaho.

Earlier this month, the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill banning abortions 20 weeks after fertilization. The measure is extremely unlikely to become law because Democrats control the U.S. Senate and the White House.

Similar to the federal measure, the 20-week provision of the Texas proposal is based on controversial medical research that suggests a fetus starts to feel pain at that point.

The Texas proposal would allow exemptions for abortions to save a woman's life and in cases of severe fetal abnormalities.

Thompson unsuccessfully proposed an exemption for victims of rape and incest.

Planned Parenthood said the stricter requirements for abortion facilities would reduce the number of clinics in Texas to five from the present 42.

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