

Abortion Rights Groups Ask Supreme Court to Halt Texas Law

Abortion rights groups in Texas filed an emergency request with the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday to strike down newly enacted **abortion** restrictions, the groups said in a statement.

A requirement that physicians who provide **abortions** have admitting privileges in local hospitals caused at least a dozen clinics and surgery centers across the state to stop offering abortion services after the law went into effect on Friday, clinic employees said.

The statute had been halted temporarily by a U.S. District judge who said the provision, part of a sweeping **anti-abortion law** passed by the state earlier in the summer, placed an undue burden on women because it would cause clinics to close and block access to the procedure.

But late Thursday, a federal appeals court ruled that the statute could take effect immediately.

“Last week’s court decision allowing this extreme measure to take effect has already begun to hit the state of Texas like a tsunami, taking away vital health services from women,” said Louise Melling, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Officials at the Texas governor’s office could not be reached for an immediate comment.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday dismissed another **abortion** case involving Oklahoma. The dismissal left intact an Oklahoma court ruling that invalidated a state law cracking down on the use of the abortion-inducing drug RU-486.

The Texas provision was part of a sweeping **anti-abortion law**, passed in July by the Republican-led Texas Legislature, that also requires **abortion clinics** to meet heightened building standards, bans abortion after 20 weeks and requires strict adherence to federal guidelines in prescribing the so-called **abortion pill**.

The law gained national headlines when Democratic state Sen. Wendy Davis spoke against it for several hours, gaining her a nationwide following and encouraging her to announce her campaign for Texas governor last month.

Attorneys for the state argued that Texas has the right to put in place laws that discourage abortion and said opponents, including **Planned Parenthood** and the American Civil Liberties Union, had not proven in court that the law could cut off access to abortions.

Opponents said that because many providers had been unable to obtain admitting privileges for their physicians, they would have to shut down services at about one-third of the facilities in the state and cut off access to a legal abortion for an estimated 22,000 women.

Hours after the decision from the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals last week, managers or employees of a dozen clinics from El Paso to Dallas to the Rio Grande Valley told Reuters their facilities had stopped providing abortions. Several said they were still trying to gain admitting privileges for their physicians.

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