

After Governor's Veto, West Virginia Bans Abortions Over 20 Weeks

The Republican-controlled West Virginia legislature on Friday banned abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, overriding the governor's veto and joining 11 other states in prohibiting abortion at that point.

The state Senate voted 27-5 to override the veto by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, a Democrat. The state House of Delegates had voted to override his veto on Wednesday.

Tomblin had rejected the measure on Tuesday. He cited constitutional concerns since the bill barred termination of some pregnancies before the fetuses were viable.

A spokesman for Tomblin said the governor wanted the ban to target a later gestational period to ensure legality. The law takes effect on May 26.

Planned Parenthood said in a statement that bans on abortion after 20 weeks had been passed in 11 other states since 2010. Idaho and Georgia have similar bans but they are not being enforced because they are undergoing legal challenges.

The reproductive health advocacy group said abortions after 20 weeks were rare and usually occurred due to maternal health risks.

Last year, eight abortions took place in West Virginia after 20 weeks, it said.