

Citing Rape and Incest, Missouri Governor Doesn't Like the 72-Hour Abortion Wait Law

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon said on Thursday he has “profound concerns” about a bill state lawmakers approved this week requiring women to wait 72 hours for an abortion, even in cases of rape or incest.

Nixon, a Democrat, did not say whether he would veto the bill, which the Missouri House of Representatives approved on Wednesday, advancing it to the governor.

Missouri would join Utah and South Dakota as the only states to require women to wait 72 hours to have an abortion after an initial visit to a doctor, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit research organization that supports the right to abortion.

Utah's law does not require a 72-hour wait if a woman is a victim of rape, incest or is age 14 or under, said Elizabeth Nash, state issues coordinator for Guttmacher.

Nixon said Missouri's bill, which makes an exception for medical emergencies, would get the same full review as all other legislation. He could sign the bill, veto it or let it become law without his signature.

The governor said in a statement that lawmakers' failure to include an exception for rape or incest would separate Missouri from all but one other state in the nation. The state currently has a 24-hour waiting period.

“I have profound concerns about its impact on women and

especially the victims of these heinous crimes,” Nixon said.

In July, Nixon let a bill requiring doctors to be present for drug-induced abortions to become law without his signature. New laws usually take effect in late August in Missouri.

Alabama is the only other state with a waiting period longer than 24 hours, Nash said. Alabama’s law requiring a 48-hour waiting period went into effect this week, she said.

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