

Florida Senate Passes 24-Hour Abortion Waiting Period Bill

The Florida Senate approved a bill on Friday mandating a 24-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions, with all Republicans voting in favor and all Democrats opposed.

The bill is now headed to Republican Governor Rick Scott, who is expected to sign it into law.

Senator Anitere Flores, a Miami Republican who sponsored the bill, said it was reasonable for women to wait 24 hours after meeting with their doctors for an “informed consent” briefing on fetal development, which is already required by state law, and undergoing the abortion procedure itself.

She noted that state law requires a three-day waiting period for purchasing a gun or getting married, and 20 days for divorces.

“This does not limit a woman’s right to make the choice, if that’s what she wants to do, to have the abortion,” said Senator Kelli Stargel, a Lakeland Republican. “What this does is to give the women an opportunity to think about it, so she doesn’t potentially live through years of regret.”

For profit reasons, she said, many clinics rush women into abortion immediately after the required briefing on possible medical side effects.

Senate Minority Leader Arthenia Joyner, a Tampa Democrat, said the legislature has been “chipping away” at abortion rights since 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized the procedure. She said it is significant that men run both chambers of the legislature.

The bill was amended to waive the waiting period in cases of

rape, incest, domestic violence or human trafficking.

The Senate voted 26-13 for the bill, with all Republicans supporting it and all Democrats voting against it.

The House voted 77-41 in favor of the measure on Wednesday, with most Republicans in support and most Democrats opposed.

If enacted, Florida would join 24 other U.S. states requiring women to wait at least 24 hours before getting an abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which tracks reproductive health policy.

A Tennessee bill requiring a 48-hour waiting period has passed the state legislature and is awaiting the governor's signature.

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