

Wisconsin Senate Passes Measure Banning Abortions After 20 Weeks

June 9 (Reuters) – The Republican-controlled Wisconsin Senate approved a bill on Tuesday that would ban abortions after 20 weeks unless the mother was suffering from a medical emergency.

Senators approved the measure by a vote of 19-14, sending the bill to the Republican-led state Assembly. It is unclear when and if lawmakers in that chamber will take up the measure. The office of Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said on Tuesday the Republican caucus had yet to discuss the bill.

Governor Scott Walker, a potential candidate for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, will sign the proposal if it gets to his desk, his office said on Tuesday.

The bill prohibits abortions 20 weeks after fertilization, which is when some abortion rights opponents believe the unborn child is capable of experiencing pain.

“Do we want to prohibit inflicting excruciating pain on 5-to 5-1/2-month-old babies? I certainly (do),” Republican Senator Mary Lazich said.

The measure does not make exemptions for cases of rape or incest. A doctor who performs an abortion after 20 weeks will face a \$10,000 fine and up to 3-1/2 years in prison if found guilty of breaking the law.

“We have absolutely no right to tell a doctor what’s going to happen in their emergency room,” Democratic Senator Jon Erpenbach said.

Similar bans on abortion after 20 weeks are law in 14 states,

according to NARAL Pro-Choice America, an abortion rights advocacy group.

In May, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled the law in Idaho was unconstitutional. The court also struck down an Idaho law that required all second-trimester abortions to occur in a hospital