

Supreme Court won't revive North Carolina abortion law

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The Supreme Court on Monday rejected an appeal from North Carolina to revive a requirement that abortion providers show and describe an ultrasound to a pregnant woman before she has an abortion.

The justices left in place an appeals [court](#) decision that said the 2011 North Carolina [law](#) was "ideological in intent" and violated doctors' free-speech rights. The measure was championed by conservative Republicans in the state legislature, who overrode a veto from the then-Democratic governor to approve the law.

The North Carolina law would have required abortion providers to display and describe the ultrasound even if the woman refused to look and listen—a mandate that the court found particularly troublesome. The law did not include any exception for cases of rape, incest or severe fetal anomalies.

"North Carolinians should take comfort in knowing that this intrusive and unconstitutional law, which placed the ideological agenda of politicians above a doctor's ability to provide a patient with the specific care she needs, will never go into effect," said Sarah Preston of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina, one of several groups that opposed the law in court. "We're very glad the courts have recognized that politicians have no business interfering in personal medical decisions that should be left to a woman and her doctor."

North Carolina is among 23 states, mostly in the South and the Midwest,

which passed laws dealing with the administration of ultrasounds by abortion providers, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research institute that supports abortion-rights.

Tami Fitzgerald, the executive director of the NC Values Coalition and a supporter of increased restrictions on abortion, said it made no sense to her that federal judges would block a woman's access to what she described as life-saving information.

"In any other medical procedure, doctors would have a duty to disclose all of the relevant information, and, yet, a procedure as destructive and life-changing as abortion is held to a lower standard," Fitzgerald said.

The court took no action in a separate abortion case from Mississippi. The state is appealing a lower court ruling that effectively allowed Mississippi's lone [abortion clinic](#) to remain open and blocked a state law that would have required the clinic's doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

A second appeals court ruling involving a Texas law imposing restrictions on abortion providers also is expected to make its way to the Supreme Court soon. In Texas, the [appeals court](#) upheld the admitting privileges requirement and other provisions that could force 11 clinics to close by July 1, lawyers for the clinics said in court papers.

The North Carolina case is Walker-McGill v. Stuart, 14-1172.

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