

Montana abortion bill would make doctors try to save fetus

February 24 2017, by Bobby Caina Calvin

Montana lawmakers pushed forward with a measure that would effectively ban all abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy, regardless of the medical risks to a woman, by requiring doctors to deliver the fetus and try to save it.

Critics of the bill said it could be among the most extreme anti-[abortion](#) laws in the nation, even as other states consider their own proposals that would reduce the window for legal abortions.

Montana already outlaws late-term abortions, unless the life of the woman is at risk—but the proposal would further restrict abortion rights. It would require doctors to deliver a fetus at six months or later by inducing labor or performing a cesarean section.

Once the fetus is removed, doctors would be required to try to resuscitate the baby. Doctors who violate the law could be charged with a felony.

"They either have to be a miracle worker or a felon," said Sen. Diane Sands, a Democrat from Missoula who opposed the bill. She added, "It's by far the most extreme measure I've seen ever proposed in Montana."

The measure won preliminary passage Thursday in the state Senate by a 32-18 vote, mostly along party lines.

The early victory by supporters will likely be short-lived. Even if the bill

gets final approval in the Senate and wins support from the House—both controlled by Republicans—it would almost certainly be vetoed by Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock, who supports abortion rights.

The measure's main proponent, Republican Sen. Albert Olszewski, said scientific and technological advances have increased the viability of fetuses.

"This bill was inspired by a real situation, a situation where a late-term pregnancy put a woman in a life-threatening condition and had to deal with this horrible decision of being told she had to terminate this pregnancy," said Olszewski, who is also an orthopedic surgeon.

He said for instances in which the mother's life is at risk, that he's "proposing two methods of terminating a pregnancy—and both would produce a live birth and it's safe for the mother."

Both sides said the proposal could be a first of its kind.

In recent months, anti-abortion forces in some states have sought to place further restrictions on the availability of the procedure, including reducing funding, limiting access to clinics and narrowing the time frame that an abortion could be sought.

Abortion remains a potent political issue and could be a central focus in the confirmation hearings of Judge Neil Gorsuch for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Opponents of the Montana bill expressed concern that the law would take away medical decisions from a woman and her doctor.

Should it become law, abortion-rights groups would challenge it, said Martha Stahl, CEO of Planned Parenthood Montana.

"It is quite extreme, and we believe this bill is unconstitutional under Roe v. Wade," Stahl said, referring to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

She said the legislation "requires women to undergo invasive medical procedures that might not be the best medical options for a woman."

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Montana abortion bill would make doctors try to save fetus (2017, February 24)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-02-montana-abortion-bill-doctors-fetus.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--