

Mississippi governor signs 'heartbeat' abortion law

March 21 2019, by Emily Wagster Pettus



In this March 14, 2019 file photograph, a Planned Parenthood supporter hosts an abortion rights button on her hat during a rally on the steps of the Capitol in Jackson, Miss. On Tuesday, March 19, 2019, Mississippi senators passed the final version of a bill that would ban most abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, about six weeks into pregnancy. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis, File)

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant on Thursday signed a bill to outlaw most abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, about six weeks into pregnancy.

During a ceremony at the state Capitol, Bryant said he's not worried about lawsuits as Mississippi prepares to enact one of the strictest abortion laws in the nation.

The New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights calls it "blatantly unconstitutional" and says it will sue Mississippi to try to block the law from taking effect on July 1.

Mississippi is one of several states considering similar bills this year. Abortion opponents are emboldened by new conservatives on the Supreme Court and are seeking cases to challenge the court's 1973 ruling the legalized abortion nationwide.

"The term 'heartbeat bill' is a manipulative misnomer," the center tweeted. "These bills actually rob women of their choice to have an abortion before they even know they're pregnant."

Bryant tweeted in response: "We will all answer to the good Lord one day. I will say in this instance, 'I fought for the lives of innocent babies, even under the threat of legal action.'"

The Mississippi bill says a physician who performs an [abortion](#) after a fetal heartbeat is detected could face revocation of his or her medical license. The bill also says abortions could be allowed after a [fetal heartbeat](#) is found if a pregnancy endangers a woman's life or one of her major bodily functions. The House and Senate both rejected efforts to allow exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape or incest.



In this Jan. 20, 2019 file photograph, Gov. Phil Bryant explains to reporters the advantages of passing and signing the Mississippi Broadband Enabling Act, at the Capitol in Jackson, Miss. Mississippi's white Republican governor Bryant and U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson, the state's only black Democratic congressman are feuding over who should get credit for the home of a slain civil rights leader becoming a national monument. Thompson says he has worked on the issue for 16 years. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis, File)

Georgia and Tennessee are among the states considering similar bills. Kentucky's law was immediately challenged by the American Civil

Liberties Union when Republican Gov. Matt Bevin signed it on March 14, and a federal judge has temporarily blocked it.

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