

Missouri, latest US state to restrict abortion

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The Missouri House passed a bill on Friday banning abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected, making it the latest US state to pass restrictions on ending a pregnancy.

The [bill](#), overwhelmingly approved by the Republican-led legislature and expected to be signed by the Midwestern state's Republican governor, would ban abortions from about eight weeks of pregnancy.

Doctors who perform abortions could be subject to [prison sentences](#) of between five and 15 years.

Republican-led legislatures in several US states have recently passed bills restricting [abortion](#) access in a bid to eventually challenge the 1973 US Supreme Court ruling legalizing the practice.

Abortion opponents are hoping the moves will prompt the nation's highest [court](#), which now has a conservative majority, to overturn its landmark decision in the case known as Roe vs Wade.

The Republican-dominated legislature in the southern state of Alabama passed legislation this week that places a near-total ban on ending a pregnancy, even in cases of rape and incest.

The Missouri bill also does not allow exceptions for rape or incest, only in cases where the mother's life is in danger.

All of the state bans have either been blocked by a judge or are headed

for the courts, and some of their backers have said they want the issue to go all the way to the nine-member Supreme Court.

The Republican bid to force a showdown over Roe vs Wade comes as President Donald Trump is ramping up for a 2020 re-election campaign with abortion as a hot-button issue.

The Supreme Court has previously reaffirmed a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, but some anti-abortion activists believe the time may have come to turn the tables.

Since taking office, Trump has appointed two conservative justices—Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh—and liberal members of the court are outnumbered five to four.

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