

# [***Abortion rights initiatives make the ballot in South Dakota and Colorado***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C23-4091-DYMD-633N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Voters in Colorado and South Dakota will have a say on abortion rights this fall after enough signatures were collected to put measures on the ballots.

South Dakota voters will get a chance at direct democracy on the contentious issue in a conservative state where a trigger law banning nearly all abortions went into effect after Roe v. Wade was overturned.

Colorado’s measure, which made the ballot Friday, would enshrine abortion protections into the state constitution. Colorado already has broad protections for abortion, becoming a haven for those in states that have restricted abortion, [*particularly Texas.*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-ban-restriction-access-roe-dobbs-travel-5f0ce79836cea8ba7a102852c0543726)

South Dakota's top election official announced Thursday that about 85% of the [*more than 55,000 signatures submitted*](https://apnews.com/article/south-dakota-abortion-rights-ballot-initiative-1add60de74f1985a19d01084d796297d) in support of the ballot initiative are valid, exceeding the required 35,017 signatures.

Voters will vote up or down on prohibiting the state from regulating abortion before the end of the first trimester and allowing the state to regulate abortion after the second trimester, except when necessary to preserve the life or physical or emotional health of a pregnant woman.

Dakotans for Health, which sponsored the amendment, said in a statement Thursday that the signatures' validation “certified that the people of South Dakota, not the politicians in Pierre, will be the ones to decide whether to restore Roe v. Wade as the law of South Dakota.”

Abortion rights are also on the ballot in [*Florida*](https://apnews.com/article/florida-abortion-ballot-elections-931be34f9ffdd6d74f6beade05eeee47) and [*Maryland*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-maryland-constitutional-amendment-66a9c900d1b553e836e4b94cd3f32ae4), and advocates are still [*working toward that goal*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-ballot-amendment-ban-protection-states-2024-052ff9846f8416efb725240af22b92ec) in states including Arizona, Montana and Nebraska in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 reversal of Roe.

Voters of seven other states have already approved abortion access in ballot measures, including four that wrote abortion rights into their constitution.

Supporters for Colorado's ballot measure said they turned in over 225,000 signatures, nearly double the required number of just over 124,000. Amending the state constitution will require the support of 55% of voters.

“In this time of uncertainty, we need to secure abortion rights and access in the Colorado Constitution, beyond the reach of ***politics*** and politicians,” Karen Middleton, president of Cobalt Abortion Fund based in Colorado, said in a statement Friday.

South Dakota outlaws all abortions, except to save the life of the mother.

Despite securing language on the ballot, abortion rights advocates in South Dakota face an uphill battle to success in November. [*Republican lawmakers strongly oppose*](https://apnews.com/article/south-dakota-abortion-ballot-initiative-dd0da89de4fd6d1ef133a57d697e3faf) the measure, and a major abortion rights advocate has said it doesn’t support it.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota warned when the signatures were submitted that the language as written doesn't convey the strongest legal standard for courts to evaluate abortion laws and could risk being symbolic only.

Life Defense Fund, a group organized against the initiative, said they will continue to research the signatures.

Opponents still have 30 days — until June 17 — to file a challenge with the secretary of state's office.

“We are grateful to the many dedicated volunteers who have put in countless hours, and we are resolute in our mission to defend unborn babies,” co-chairs Leslee Unruh and state Rep. Jon Hansen said in a statement.

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This story has been edited to remove New York from the list of states where abortion rights are on the ballot this fall. Earlier this month, a judge removed the amendment from the ballot, finding [*lawmakers missed a procedural step*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-new-york-amendment-election-2024-4d3815708ef78c11599e1ebbb35ef896) when they put it there.

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Dura reported from Bismarck, North Dakota. Associated Press writer Hannah Fingerhut contributed from Oakland, New Jersey.

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