

# [***Republican Sen. Rick Scott softens his abortion position after Florida Supreme Court ruling***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS6-G6R1-JC5B-G2YM-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — [*Sen. Rick Scott*](https://apnews.com/article/rick-scott-hispanic-florida-elections-republicans-bde29e6bfb7461ff4e46a2ef6a8998ac) of Florida this week joined the ranks of Republican incumbents scrambling to strike a balance on reproductive rights, saying he opposes a [*November ballot initiative*](https://apnews.com/article/florida-abortion-ban-supreme-court-ruling-6a4949fc7459afe9b5e298086a793126) to strike down his state's six-week abortion ban but thinks Congress should leave those decisions to the states.

Scott, who is seeking reelection this fall, was one of multiple senators who followed former [*President Donald Trump's*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-abortion-2024-ban-7bf06e0856b88a710c79a6eb85cffa6a) lead in softening GOP messaging on abortion. It comes in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's 2022 decision overturning the constitutional right to an abortion and leaving the matter for states to decide. Democrats, buoyed by a series of wins in state ballot initiatives and other contests since then, have made it clear that they hope to put the issue front and center this November.

After the Florida Supreme Court approved the abortion amendment for November’s ballot, Scott said in a statement that he believes in “reasonable limits placed on abortion” and is focused on ensuring that in vitro fertilization treatments are protected and adoptions are more affordable.

"We all know that life is the greatest gift we have ever received, we want to welcome every unborn baby into life, and we prefer adoption over abortion," Scott said.

Scott is softening his messaging amid roiling ***politics*** on abortion across the country. The [*Arizona Supreme Court*](https://apnews.com/article/arizona-abortion-restrictions-1864-9c68866d69dca38c728dd27b80592e8f) decided Tuesday that state officials can enforce an 1864 law criminalizing all abortions except when a woman’s life is at stake.

Florida Democrats, meanwhile, are pushing not only to enshrine abortion rights in the state's Constitution but to invoke the issue in their efforts to unseat Scott and other Republicans. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, one of the leading Democrats seeking her party's nomination against Scott, said the fight was over the “basic dignity for a woman to be able to make that choice of her own body, of when and how to start a family.”

Mucarsel-Powell said in an interview after Florida's court ruling last week that voting to support the state's abortion rights amendment in November isn’t the end game. She said voters need to vote Scott out of office so he “doesn’t have a say on what happens to women.”

Once seen as the quintessential swing state, Florida has become more conservative in recent years. Trump won there in 2016 and 2020, but Democrats, which trail in registration numbers by some 800,000 voters, are hoping a focus on abortion rights will [*swing the state back in their favor*](https://apnews.com/article/florida-2024-election-donald-trump-joe-biden-ron-desantis-abortion-1f891a163e15d3c8f4fc6ba9bb647b97).

Scott has been flagged by national Democrats as a prime target this year in their efforts to preserve a narrow majority in the Senate, though Democrats are defending more seats than Republicans. The stakes are especially high for Scott, who said last month that he is “seriously considering” running for Senate leadership. In 2022, he ran against U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell to be the Senate’s top Republican but lost with a 37-10 vote.

McConnell recently announced his intention to step down from Senate leadership later this year.

The April 1 court opinions from Florida’s Supreme Court included affirmation of a 15-week abortion ban and a trigger mechanism that would put the state's six-week abortion ban in place by next month. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee said Florida women have higher stakes on the ballot than they have in years.

“The fight against these new restrictions on access to abortion will shine a brighter spotlight on Rick Scott’s long, dangerous record of supporting draconian abortion bans,” said Maeve Coyle, the DSCC’s spokesperson. “In November, Florida voters will stand up for women’s freedom to make their most personal medical decisions by rejecting this abortion ban and firing Rick Scott from the Senate.”

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