

# [***Lawmakers vote against hearing Arizona bill repealing abortion ban on House floor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTP-DNW1-DY7V-G01F-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

April 17, 2024 Wednesday 6:31 PM GMT

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**Length:** 702 words

**Byline:** By Arit John and Cheri Mossburg, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; The Republican-controlled Arizona House of Representatives once again failed to advance a repeal of t[*he state's 160-year-old abortion ban*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/11/us/arizona-abortion-ban-enforcement/index.html) Wednesday, days after the state Supreme Court roiled state ***politics*** by reviving the law.

The vote is a blow to reproductive rights as well as GOP candidates in competitive races, who have been scrambling to distance themselves from the court's decision. Republicans facing competitive races in the state, including former President Donald Trump [*and US Senate candidate Kari Lake*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/11/politics/kari-lake-arizona-abortion-ban-support/index.html), called on the GOP-controlled legislature to work with Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs to take a more moderate path.

On Wednesday, following two attempts to discuss a bill that would repeal Arizona's 1864 ban on abortions, lawmakers voted not to discuss the measure on the House floor.

The representatives' votes were evenly split, with the chair making the tie-breaking decision. The bill itself was not brought up for a vote.

"The last thing we should be doing today is rushing a bill through the legislative process to repeal a law that has been enacted and affirmed by the legislature several times," House Speaker Ben Toma said during debate.

If the 1864 law were repealed, Arizona would revert back to a 15-week abortion restriction signed into law in 2022 by then-Gov. Doug Ducey, a Republican. The state court delayed enforcement of the ban for at least 14 days to allow plaintiffs to challenge it, meaning abortions are still allowed in the state.

The ban prohibits the procedure except to save the life of the pregnant person and threatens providers with prison sentences between two and five years.

If the 1864 law goes into effect, [*Arizona would join 14 states*](https://www.cnn.com/us/abortion-access-restrictions-bans-us-dg/index.html) that have passed near total abortion bans, some with no exceptions for victims of rape or incest.

State lawmakers last week ended a House session early to block an effort to repeal the abortion ban. And on Monday, House Republicans' general counsel laid out a strategy to defeat or dilute the impact of a potential abortion rights ballot initiative [*in a leaked memo*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/15/politics/arizona-republicans-abortion-ballot-measures/index.html).

Arizona Democrats, who are hoping to flip control of the state House and Senate, where Republicans hold one seat majorities, were quick to highlight the failed repeal. State Sen. Priya Sundareshan, the co-chair of the Arizona Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, which works to elect Democrats to the state legislature, called the vote "a perfect example of why we need to flip" control of the two chambers.

"Only then will we be able to codify abortion access and stop Republicans from interfering in our medical decisions ever again," she said in a statement.

A [*March Wall Street Journal poll*](https://s.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/WSJ_Swing_States_Partial_March_2024.pdf), conducted before the state Supreme Court ruling, found that 59% of registered voters in Arizona believe abortion should be legal in all cases or most cases with some restrictions. Another 27% said they believe abortion should be illegal with exceptions for rape, incest or when the pregnant person's life is endangered. Nine percent said the procedure should be illegal in all cases.

Abortion rights advocates say they have gathered 500,000 signatures to put an initiative on the November ballot that would enshrine abortion access in the state constitution until fetal viability, which doctors estimate is around 22 to 24 weeks of pregnancy. The group backing the initiative, Arizona for Abortion Access, needs to submit 384,000 valid signatures by July 3.

Democrats are hoping that voter frustration over draconian abortion laws advanced by Republicans will help them win elections up and down the ticket in November, in Arizona and elsewhere. In addition to the presidential race and control of the state legislature, Democrats are hoping to win an open US Senate seat and two competitive US House seats.

Abortion rights supporters and opponents gathered outside the statehouse Wednesday morning.

"It's not a political issue, it's a moral issue," said Jill Norgaard, an Arizona Right to Life board member who opposes repealing the 1864 law.

This story has been updated with additional reporting.

By Arit John and Cheri Mossburg, CNN

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**Load-Date:** May 17, 2024

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