

# [***France becomes world's first country to enshrine abortion rights in constitution***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG9-K6K1-JBSS-S0S1-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Paris (CNN) &#8212; France became the world's first countryto enshrine abortion rights in its constitution on Monday, the culmination of an effort that began in direct response [*to the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/24/politics/dobbs-mississippi-supreme-court-abortion-roe-wade/index.html).

Lawmakers from both houses of the French Parliament voted 780 to 72 in favor of the measure, easily clearing the three-fifths majority needed to amend the French constitution.

Monday's vote, held during a special gathering of lawmakers at the Palace of Versailles, southwest of Paris, was the final step in the legislative process. The [*French Senate*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/28/europe/france-senate-abortion-rights-constitution-intl/index.html) and [*National Assembly*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/30/europe/france-abortion-rights-vote-intl/index.html) each overwhelmingly approved the amendment earlier this year.

The amendment states that there is a "guaranteed freedom" to abortion in France. Some groups and lawmakers had called for stronger language to explicitly call abortion a "right."

Lawmakers hailed the move as a history-making way for France to send a clear signal of support on reproductive rights, with abortion under threat in the United States, as well as in parts of Europe, like Hungary, where far-right parties have come to power.

Following the vote, the Eiffel Tower was lit up with the words "my body my choice."

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said before the vote that lawmakers had a "moral debt" to women who were, in the past, forced to endure illegal abortions.

"Above all, we're sending a message to all women: your body belongs to you," Attal said.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the government would hold a formal ceremony celebrating the amendment's passage on Friday, International Women's Rights Day.

France first legalized abortion in 1975,after a campaign led bythen-Health Minister Simone Veil, an Auschwitz survivor who became one of the country's most famous feminist icons.

While abortion is a highly divisive issue in US ***politics*** that often falls along party lines, in France it is widely supported. Many of the lawmakers who voted against the amendment did so not because they opposed abortion, but because they felt the measure was unnecessary, given the wide support for reproductive rights.

The measure's passage is a clear victory for the French left, which has been pushing for years to guarantee abortion rights in the constitution. Before 2022, President Emmanuel Macron's government argued - like the amendment's current opponents - that the move was unnecessary.

However, in 2022, when the US Supreme Court ruled against Roe v. Wade and let states individually decide onthe issue, France was pushed to act.

French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti said perviously, before debate began in the National Assembly in January, that history was full of other examples where "fundamental rights" were believed to be safe but then taken away, "as we were recently reminded by the decision of the US Supreme Court."

"We now have irrefutable proof that no democracy, not even the largest of them all, is immune," he said.

The vote marks the 25th time the French government has amended its constitution since the founding of the Fifth Republic [*in 1958*](https://www.vie-publique.fr/dossier/267859-les-revisions-de-la-constitution-sous-la-ve-republique).

The Catholic Church was one of the few groups to announce its opposition to the amendment. The Pontifical Academy for Life, the Vatican body which focuses on issues related to bioethics, said in a statement that "in the era of universal human rights, there can be no 'right' to take human life."

A conference of French bishops on Thursday also reiterated the church's opposition to abortion ahead of the vote.

CNN's Joseph Ataman and Christopher Lamb contributed to this report

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