

# [***Nikki Haley says she believes embryos are children but disagrees with Alabama Supreme Court ruling***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BD3-24G1-JBSS-S3K5-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Former South Carolina Gov. [*Nikki Haley*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/22/politics/haley-trump-criminal-trials/index.html) said Thursday that while she personally believes a frozen embryo is a baby, she disagreed with the [*Alabama Supreme Court's in vitro fertilization ruling*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/20/us/alabama-embryo-law-ruling-supreme-court/index.html) last week and felt it may be time for the state to "go back and look at the law."

In an interview on CNN's "The Lead with Jake Tapper," Haley sought to clarify her initial responses to the ruling, which found that frozen embryos are children in the eyes of the law and those who destroy them can be held to blame for wrongful death.

The controversial decision has enraged abortion rights activists and thrown into doubt the ability of women in Alabama to undergo IVF to become pregnant, as fertility clinics now weigh new and potentially onerous new legal liabilities.

When asked Wednesday by NBC News whether she agreed that embryos are children followin g the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling, Haley responded: "Embryos, to me, are babies."

She then brought up her own fertility challenges.

"I had artificial insemination. That's how I had my son," Haley said. "One thing is to save sperm or to save eggs. But when you talk about an embryo, you are talking about, to me, that's a life. So, I do see where that's coming from when they talk about that."

On Thursday, Haley told CNN she believed the Alabama judges ruled correctly under the state's current legal guidelines.

"I think that the court was doing it based on the law, and I think Alabama needs to go back and look at the law," Haley said, adding that the closures of [*three fertility clinics*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/21/us/alabama-ruling-frozen-embryos-facility-pauses-ivf?cid=external-feeds_iluminar_msn) in Alabama in the immediate wake of the ruling was especially concerning.

On Wednesday night, after her first response to the court ruling, Haley denied that she had ever "agreed" with the decision in an interview on CNN's "King Charles."

"What the question that I was asked is, 'Do I believe an embryo is a baby?' I do think that if you look in the definition, an embryo is considered an unborn baby," Haley said.

Pressed by Tapper on Thursday over her suggestion that it was the law, and not the court, to blame for the Alabama decision, Haley said she was not aware of the religious language used by Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Parker, who wrote in the majority opinion: "Human life cannot be wrongfully destroyed without incurring the wrath of a holy God."

Haley said she "had not heard" those words but acknowledged that it "certainly" seemed to suggest Parker's personal religious views had some influence on his position.

The landmark ruling from Alabama sent shockwaves across the country and further magnified the high stakes of an [*abortion debate*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/26/politics/abortion-politics-republicans-2024/index.html) that has gripped American ***politics*** since [*Roe v. Wade was overturned*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/24/politics/dobbs-mississippi-supreme-court-abortion-roe-wade/index.html) by the US Supreme Court in June 2022. The high court's decision to end federal abortion protections and put the issue in the hands of the states sparked an immediate rush by conservative leaders to pass or enforce existing, but previously dormant, laws banning abortion early on in almost all pregnancies.

The backlash against the fall of Roe was almost instantaneous and cut across party lines. First, Kansas voted overwhelmingly to reject an amendment that would have allowed state lawmakers to ban the procedure. From there, in similar ballot measures and in elections that Democrats have sought to turn into de facto referenda on abortion rights, abortion opponents have consistently lost.

Former [*President Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45), whose appointment of three conservative Supreme Court justices paved the way for Roe's reversal, has not weighed in on the Alabama case - a sign of the fraught ***politics*** surrounding an issue that Trump and other Republicans have sought to downplay or ignore.

[*President Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) and leading Democrats immediately slammed the Alabama ruling, calling it "the blueprint" for Republicans' "extreme MAGA reproductive agenda."

"What is happening in Alabama right now is only possible because Donald Trump's Supreme Court justices overturned Roe v. Wade," Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said in a statement Thursday, before warning that Trump, if elected again, would "impose his extreme anti-freedom agenda on the entire country."

Earlier this week, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre spoke along similar lines, telling reporters that the Alabama ruling represented "exactly the type of chaos that we expected when the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade."

Biden has previously said Republican officials were pushing extreme views on abortion, while also calling on Congress to codify the protections in Roe v. Wade.

For her part, Vice President Kamala Harris has taken a prominent role on the issue of reproductive health care. Harris addressed the topic Thursday during a roundtable in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the latest stop on her national "[*Fight for Reproductive Freedoms" Tour*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/19/politics/harris-2024-abortion/index.html).

"Freedom is fundamental to the promise of America," she said. "Since that (Dobbs) ruling came down, we have seen states across our country - thankfully not in Michigan - but states across our country proposing and passing laws that criminalize doctors and nurses."

CLARIFICATION: This story has been updated to provide additional context around Nikki Haley's position on the Alabama ruling.

CNN's Donald Judd and Priscilla Alvarez contributed to this report.

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