

# Florida's 24-hour abortion waiting period to take effect

February 26 2016, by Brendan Farrington

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Abortion opponents hailed an appeals court decision Friday that allows the state to begin enforcing a law requiring women to wait 24 hours before getting an abortion, while a group suing to overturn the law vowed to keep fighting.

Florida's 1st District Court of Appeal lifted an injunction that blocked the waiting period from taking effect. The three-judge panel said opponents failed to prove the law would create irreparable harm or that the lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida on behalf of a Gainesville abortion provider is likely to succeed.

"We are disappointed that the court reached this decision despite the un rebutted evidence that this law poses a real hardship to many Florida [women](#), but will continue to do everything in our power to ensure that this demeaning and intrusive law is quickly stopped in its tracks," said Nancy Abudu, the ACLU of Florida's legal director, in an emailed statement.

Abortion opponents praised the decision.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic that the injunction has been lifted," said Republican Rep. Jennifer Sullivan of Eustis, who sponsored the legislation. "This is a huge win for women's health and the ability for women to have a face to face consultation with the doctor before the procedure."

At least 26 other states have a waiting period before an abortion can be performed. The Florida law, however, is being challenged based on a privacy clause in the state constitution that doesn't apply in other states. It has been used to overturn other Florida abortion restrictions.

"This was written in such a way that I'm confident it will ultimately be found constitutional and today is one step closer toward that direction," Sullivan said in a statement emailed by her staff.

Planned Parenthood said it opposes the law but said Florida clinics would immediately comply with the waiting period.

"We support all efforts to protect women's access to medical care, including safe and legal abortion without delay," said Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates. "The state should support medically appropriate and scientifically based health care policies, not legislation introduced with the intention of shaming, coercing or judging a woman."

Republican Gov. Rick Scott signed the waiting period into law last year but Judge Charles Francis blocked it one day before the waiting period was scheduled to take effect. The law has exceptions for victims of rape, incest, domestic abuse or human trafficking if women present their doctors with a police report, restraining order or similar documentation.

Janet Morana, executive director of New York-based Priests for Life, said waiting periods in other states have helped prevent some women from going through with an abortion.

"The pregnancy health centers will tell you that waiting periods do help women confide in them and seek them and see what their options are," she said. "A waiting period is giving women more options and more choice, which is supposed to be what it's about, isn't it?"

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