



ACLU Iowa

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IOWA'S 6-WEEK ABORTION LAW STRUCK DOWN AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

January 22, 2018 (Des Moines, IA) – Today, the Polk County District Court ruled that Iowa's 6-week abortion ban violates the Iowa's state constitution and issued a permanent injunction.

As the district court ruled, the statute would have banned abortion well before viability. Indeed, the statute would have banned abortion at a stage in pregnancy before many women even know they are pregnant.

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland Medical Director Jill Meadows, M.D., said, "Today's ruling is a victory for every Iowan who has ever needed or will need a safe, legal abortion. At Planned Parenthood, we're here to provide nonjudgmental support and factual, medically accurate information so that every patient can make their own personal decision about a pregnancy based on their own values, desires and needs, without political interference. We are pleased that especially today, on the 46th anniversary of the landmark decision *Roe v. Wade*, abortion care was upheld as a safe and legal part of basic reproductive health care."

The law would have prohibited most abortions as soon as any embryonic cardiac activity was detected, usually around 6 weeks. The district court rejected the argument that women could be required to make the decision to terminate or carry a pregnancy to term so soon in the pregnancy. Many women don't even know they are pregnant at 6 weeks. The law, the court ruled, "would relegate the individual rights of Iowa women to something less than fundamental."

"Today's victory is essential to the rights and safety of women in Iowa," said **Rita Bettis Austen, ACLU of Iowa legal director**. "It follows in the footsteps of the Iowa Supreme Court decision on abortion in 2018 that recognized the fundamental right to a safe and legal abortion for Iowa women, which cannot be legislated away. Today's decision upholds women's freedom and equality in Iowa."

Francine Thompson, Executive Director of the Emma Goldman Clinic in Iowa City, said, "The Emma Goldman Clinic is proud to stand with our partners, the ACLU of Iowa and Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, as we celebrate the court's decision today to overturn the egregious heart beat ban signed into law by Kim Reynolds. It is befitting that as we celebrate the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, our clients can continue to rely on access to first and second trimester abortions at the Emma Goldman Clinic."

Erin Davison-Rippey, Planned Parenthood's State Executive Director of Iowa, said, "We are grateful the Court blocked Gov. Reynolds' egregious attempt to ban safe, legal abortion in Iowa. Planned Parenthood will continue to stand up for Iowa women and fight back against the

Legislature’s attacks on reproductive health. We will do all we can to make sure abortion continues to be safe and legal in our state – no matter what.”

The ruling can be found at

https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/05771_eqce083074_ofju_6621248.pdf

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Planned Parenthood of the Heartland is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides, promotes, and protects reproductive and sexual health through health services, education, and advocacy. An affiliate of America’s most trusted provider of reproductive health care, PPHeartland is proud to offer a full range of high-quality services at 10 health centers in Iowa and Nebraska.

The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone’s civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans—from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more—to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to www.aclu-ia.org.

The Emma Goldman Clinic is the first outpatient abortion clinic in Iowa and the oldest surviving feminist independent nonprofit abortion clinic. The Emma Goldman Clinic exists to empower women and men in all life stages through the provision of quality reproductive health care that includes abortion services, gynecology services, safer sex promotion, and active education.