

## Missouri Judge Reinstates Block on State's Abortion Restrictions

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– Categories: Human Rights



A Missouri judge has once again paused many of the state's strict abortion restrictions, marking another dramatic turn in a years-long legal battle over reproductive rights. On Thursday, Jackson County Circuit Judge Jerri Zhang issued a new preliminary injunction, finding that these laws likely violate the state constitutional right to abortion that voters approved just last year.

This ruling comes only weeks after the Missouri Supreme Court lifted an earlier hold on the same restrictions. But upon reconsideration, Judge Zhang determined that the laws conflicted with the voter-approved constitutional amendment that guarantees access to abortion until a fetus reaches viability, typically around 21 weeks of pregnancy.

For Planned Parenthood and its patients, the decision is a major victory. The organization announced it would begin providing procedural abortions again at its Kansas City clinic starting Monday. Leaders from Planned Parenthood clinics in central Missouri and St. Louis said they are preparing to resume scheduling appointments as quickly as possible.

“Abortion is legal again in Missouri because voters demanded it and we fought for it,” said Emily Wales, president and CEO of Comprehensive Health of Planned Parenthood Great Plains.

Still, state officials are not backing down. Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey quickly vowed to appeal the ruling. His office said the state has a “compelling interest” in protecting women’s health, safety, and informed consent, and that it will not “stand idly by while the abortion industry seeks to strip away basic medical safeguards.”

The judge’s order blocked several provisions, including Missouri’s near-total abortion ban triggered in 2022 after the United States Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. It also paused the state’s 72-hour waiting period, strict licensing rules for abortion facilities, and a requirement that physicians performing abortions have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

However, medication abortions remain on hold while Planned Parenthood and the state continue to clash over regulatory issues.

The ruling highlights the sharp divide in Missouri over abortion rights. Just last November, voters narrowly approved the constitutional amendment protecting access. Yet state lawmakers have been working to undo those protections. In May, Missouri’s Republican-led Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment to reimpose an abortion ban, with exceptions for rape and incest. That measure could appear on the ballot in 2026 or possibly sooner.

For now, abortion services in Missouri are resuming, as the legal fight over reproductive freedom shows no sign of ending.

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