

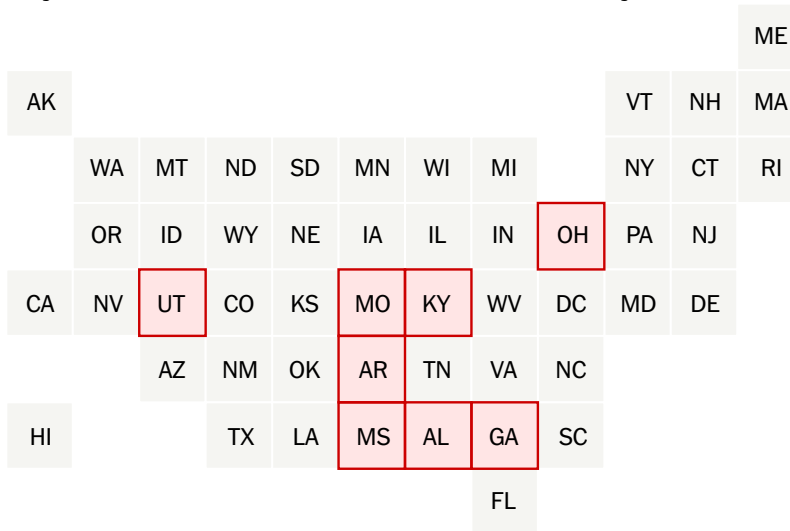


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Abortion Bans: 8 States Have Passed Bills to Limit the Procedure This Year

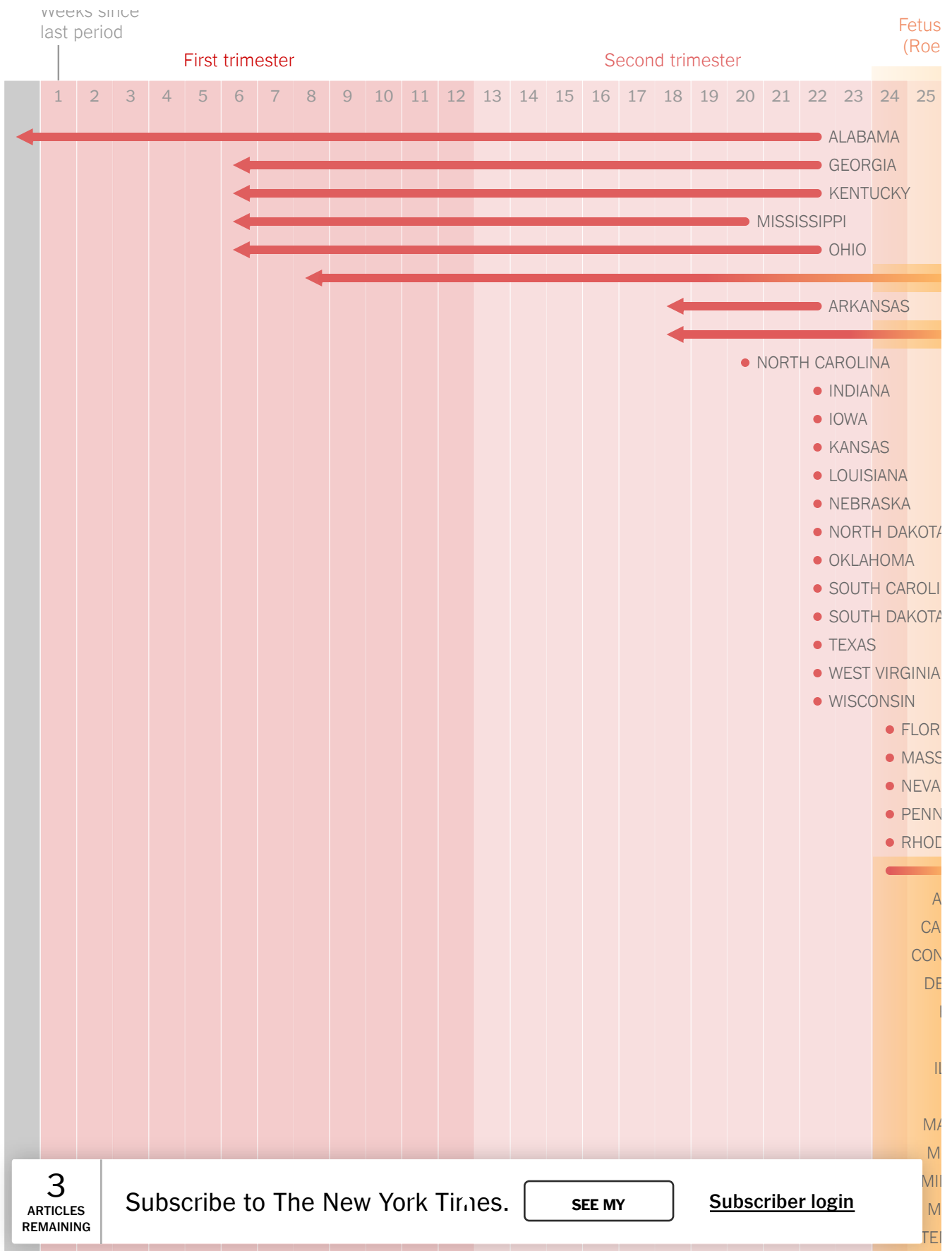
By K.K. REBECCA LAI UPDATED May 17, 2019



Missouri [passed a bill on Friday](#) to ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, making the state the eighth this year to pass abortion restrictions that could challenge the constitutional right established in *Roe v. Wade*. Earlier this week, Alabama legislators voted to ban abortions in nearly all cases.

Alabama's bill is the first outright ban on abortion; other measures limited the procedure to earlier in pregnancy. Here is how limits on abortion have changed across the states this year:

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Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi and Ohio stopped short of outright bans, instead passing so-called heartbeat bills that effectively prohibit abortions after six to eight weeks of pregnancy, when doctors can usually start detecting a fetal heartbeat. Utah and Arkansas voted to limit the procedure to the middle of the second trimester.

Most other states follow the standard set by the Supreme Court's Roe decision in 1973, which says abortion is legal until the fetus reaches viability, usually at 24 to 28 weeks.

The latest bans are not yet in effect (Kentucky's was blocked by a judge), and all are expected to face lengthy court battles — indeed, their proponents are hoping they will reach the Supreme Court.

“Some sponsors evidently want to set up a test case to challenge Roe v. Wade,” said Clarke D. Forsythe, a lawyer for Americans United for Life, an anti-abortion advocacy group.

In recent years, Republican legislators successfully pushed bills to restrict abortion by targeting providers, for example through mandating waiting periods for patients or hospital admitting privileges for doctors. Many states limited the procedure to 22 weeks, but until this year, six-week bans were largely seen as too extreme; two that passed, in Iowa and North Dakota, were later struck down in court.

Abortion rights advocates say limiting the procedure to before six weeks in pregnancy is effectively a complete ban, since most people do not learn they are pregnant until later.

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those measures blocked: A 2006 bill in South Dakota was repealed in a referendum, and a 2016 Oklahoma bill was vetoed by the governor.

States that have introduced complete abortion bans				
Introduced but not passed				
FL IN MS GA LA TX 2011	FL GA IA 2012	CO IA FL MS ND 2013	CO FL IA 2014	CO IA FL MO MS 2015
Passed but vetoed			Passed	Pending
OK CO FL IA 2016	CO MO OK KY MS TX 2017	CO KY MS IA MN NH OK IN MO OH SC 2018	AL OK GA MS MO TX IN WA 2019	

States that have introduced fetal heartbeat bills				
Introduced but not passed		Passed but struck down		
OH 2011	KY MN MS OH 2012	ND KY OH KS MS WY 2013	AL KY KS NY OH 2014	AL NY OH 2015
		Passed but struck down	Passed	Pending
AL NY OH OK 2016	AL MO NY OK IA MS OH TN 2017	IA MO OH MI MS OK SC MN NY PA TN 2018	GA OH TX KY LA FL SC MO MN IL TN MS NY MD WV 2019	

Note: Some states introduced more than one abortion ban in a given year.

But 2019 is different, advocates on both sides said. Abortion opponents saw the appointment of Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh last year as tipping the balance of the court in their favor, and state legislators were energized to pass more aggressive anti-abortion legislation.

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country on abortion,” said Elizabeth Nash, a state policy analyst at the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights. “It focused conservative legislators to pass abortion restrictions that they hope will be challenged and end up before the court, so the court can undermine or overturn abortion rights.”

“It is also focused progressive legislators like those in New York to pass laws that protect abortion rights in their own states,” she added. In January, New York enacted a measure that guarantees a “fundamental right” to abortion in the state.

All this means Alabama will not be the last state to attempt to challenge Roe. Bills seeking six-week abortion bans are currently on the state senate floors in Louisiana, and similar measures have been proposed in several more states.

Note: Some bans include exceptions to protect the life or health of the pregnant person or in the case of rape or incest. Weeks noted indicate the weeks since last period, a common measure of gestation. Some bans do not specify the weeks since last period, so an estimate is shown instead.

Source: Guttmacher Institute

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