

House OKs extending abortion wait time

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(Photo: William Woody / wwody@citizen-times.com)

A new law requiring women wait 72 hours before having an abortion passed through North Carolina's House of Representatives after less than 24 hours of debate.

The House voted 74-45 Thursday to lengthen the time a woman must wait for an abortion after discussing the issue with her health care provider from 24 to 72 hours. The bill now heads to the Senate.

The state House Health Committee approved the controversial House Bill 465 Wednesday.

Moving this legislation forward is a "victory" for women and children, said Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the North Carolina Family Values Coalition.

"It will give women the opportunity to further consider an important decision that will impact the rest of their lives," she said Wednesday.

"We know Roe v. Wade is the law, but as long as abortion is legal, it should at least be safe.

Abortion rights groups have long argued that such bills are part of an ongoing effort to deny women their right to choose.

Extended waiting periods shame women and result in more transportation, lodging and child care costs, Shoshannah Smith Sayers, interim executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina said Wednesday.

"Waiting periods primarily affect poor women, and in particular women of color and women living in rural parts of state," she added. "We're concerned that the most vulnerable women are going to have another hurdle to jump in order to get legal abortion medical care."

Less than a year after [the region's only abortion clinic closed](https://www.citizen-times.com/story/local/2014/06/27/asheville-abortion-clinic-close-saturday/11456093/) (/story/local/2014/06/27/asheville-abortion-clinic-close-saturday/11456093/), Planned Parenthood Asheville Health Center quietly started performing the procedure Friday.

The clinic opened its new \$2.9 million facility south of downtown in January. Before, women wanting clinic-based abortion care had to travel either 125 miles to Charlotte or 60 miles to Greenville, South Carolina.

(<https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2015/04/22/abortion-resumes-asheville-nc-debates-regulations/26205149/>).

"This is great news for the women of Western North Carolina," Caitlin Owens, Planned Parenthood Asheville Health Center manager, said earlier this week. "Abortion is part of a full range of reproductive health care that one in three women will access at some point in her lifetime."

Local antiabortion activist Meredith Hunt is trying to ramp up protests.

"To me, it is really depressing that they are going to be killing human beings again in Asheville," Hunt said Wednesday. "This is a person, a person in embryonic form. All of us were in that position and when you kill that entity in the womb, you are killing a person."

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