



Planned parenthood, the ACLU and the Center for Reproductive Rights have filed a lawsuit against Gov. Kevin Stitt after abortion was considered an elective surgery that cannot be performed as part of the state's COVID-19 coronavirus executive order.

Not only is Stitt being sued, but governors of three other states -- Texas, Ohio and Iowa -- have had lawsuits filed against them for the same issue. The groups say abortion shouldn't be ruled elective during the global health crisis, adding that those who need them don't have time to wait.

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"It is critical that we do everything to make sure access to abortion care is protected," said Nicole McAfee, director of policy and advocacy for the ACLU of Oklahoma.

"Challenging what has been a trend by Republican governors to use the COVID-19 public health response to try to limit access to abortion care. It just seeks injunction that allows folks to provide that critical abortion access to continue to practice."

Speaking on behalf of the governor's office, Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter sent KOCO 5 statement saying the lawsuit, "It attacks the governor's executive order which preserves limited health care resources and medical safety equipment, in blatant disregard of the escalating illness and death this pandemic is inflicting on Oklahomans."

"My office will vigorously defend the governor's executive order and the necessity to give precedence to essential medical procedures during this daunting public health crisis," Hunter said. "Make no mistake, this lawsuit will itself drain significant resources, medical and legal, from emergency efforts, and likely, directly and indirectly, bring harm to Oklahomans as a result."

The lawsuit claims Stitt's decision violates constitutional rights and risks the health and safety of patients.

"I think that the inclusion of abortion to Gov. Stitt's elective procedures was an afterthought," someone said. "It's a decision that he will never personally be faced with, but for the folks who are it is definitely a necessary procedure."

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