

Mt. Juliet moves to lift zoning limits on surgical abortions now offered by carafem after court order

[Andy Humbles](#), Nashville Tennessean Published 11:43 a.m. CT May 19, 2020 | Updated 4:23 p.m. CT May 19, 2020



Abortion provider carafem has opened at Providence Pavilion in Mt. Juliet. (Photo: Andy Humbles / The Tennessean)

A Mt. Juliet clinic is now offering surgical abortions, a procedure that city commissioners are taking steps to lift restrictions on after a court order.

Mt. Juliet's city commission has unanimously passed the first of two votes needed to revoke legislation now in place that limits surgical abortion care to industrial zoned areas.

The zoning restrictions have prevented a national abortion provider named carafem ([/story/news/local/wilson/2020/01/17/mt-juliet-looks-amendment-surgical-abortion-regulations-after-aclu-lawsuit/4494530002/](#)) from offering surgical abortions at its clinic opened more than a year ago on Crossings Circle, a heavy commercial area near Providence Marketplace in Mt. Juliet.

A federal judge ruled on May 1 that Mt. Juliet's zoning ordinances placed an "undue burden" and "substantial obstacle," on women seeking abortions after a lawsuit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Tennessee and a law firm on behalf of carafem against the city.

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Mt. Juliet Mayor Ed Hagerty declined to comment on the city's new ordinance to repeal current restrictions on surgical abortions because of the pending litigation.

"The ruling underscores the importance of pursuing policies which can be upheld as constitutional rather than allowing for the possibility of establishing precedent in support of abortion rights," Tennessee Right to Life President Brian Harris said. "It is a grievous wrong to hurt women and kill the unborn, especially in a pro-life community that has made clear that they don't want abortions occurring there.

"Hopefully the citizens of Mount Juliet will continue to stand for life and promote policies and strategies that will practically benefit women, girls and unborn children."

Carafem started offering surgical abortion care in Mt. Juliet after the federal court ruling, according to Chief Operating Officer Melissa Grant.

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"We are pleased that Mt. Juliet is taking the necessary steps to repeal this indefensible ordinance," Grant said. "Carafem will continue to fight those who attempt to undermine the human right to decide if or when to have children."

Carafem announced plans to first [offer birth control and medical abortions](/story/news/local/wilson/2019/04/10/abortion-provider-carafem-mount-juliet-zoning/3416815002/) to end pregnancies up to 10 weeks when it opened with the intent to eventually offer surgical abortions.



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Mt. Juliet amended its zoning code to regulate surgical abortions shortly after carafem's opening. A second ordinance with amendments was later approved.

A special city commission meeting to hold the second and final vote needed to repeal the zoning restrictions on surgical abortions is scheduled for May 29, according to city personnel.

Reach Andy Humbles at ahumbles@tennessean.com or 615-726-5939 and on Twitter @AndyHumbles.

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