



Planned Parenthood of the Heartland



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Planned Parenthood of the Heartland and ACLU file appeal against one of the most severe abortion restrictions in U.S.

(Des Moines, IA) – Today the Polk County District Court declined to block a law requiring women seeking an abortion to wait 72 hours after their first appointment and make a second, medically unnecessary trip to their health care provider to access abortion care. If allowed to take effect, this law would be a devastating burden to vulnerable Iowa women who already face significant barriers to care; low-income and rural women, as well as women at risk for domestic violence and women experiencing pregnancy-related complications would suffer the greatest hardship.

Planned Parenthood and The ACLU of Iowa have already filed an appeal of today's ruling, and will seek a temporary injunction to protect Iowa women as the case proceeds.

Fortunately, the district court recognized the chaos that took place after the legislation briefly went into effect on short notice on May 5, 2017, and stayed the Act for 30 days to allow Planned Parenthood to appeal and to seek an injunction from the Iowa Supreme Court.

"If this law indeed goes into effect, it will leave Iowa with one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country, said Suzanna de Baca, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland. "This unconstitutional disregard by lawmakers – including Gov. Kim Reynolds – for women and their right to abortion access, is unacceptable. We will fight with every available resource until we ensure that all women have access to the care they need."

Gov. Terry Branstad signed this malicious, politically motivated, anti-woman legislation into law in May 2017. It was briefly in effect before the Iowa Supreme Court temporarily enjoined it pending trial.

This law would force women to have an abortion later in pregnancy and risk their health solely for political – not medical – reasons. The law would make Iowa one of only three states – along with Missouri and South Dakota – that force women to wait 72 hours and make two trips to her provider to access safe, legal abortion.

Rita Bettis, ACLU of Iowa Legal Director, said, "We have already filed an appeal, and will be asking the Iowa Supreme Court to protect the rights of Iowa women from the significant harm and burdens imposed by the law. Those substantial burdens are a violation of the fundamental rights of Iowa women and equal protection under the Iowa Constitution. This law is inconsistent with the equality and core rights of Iowa women that are afforded the highest protections under the Iowa Constitution."

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Planned Parenthood of the Heartland (PPHeartland) has served women and men of all ages since the 1930s. Today the agency offers a full range of quality reproductive health care services to residents in Iowa and Nebraska through 10 health centers and Education Resource Centers in Des Moines, Lincoln and Omaha.

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The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans—from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more—to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to www.aclu-ia.org.