

Utah Abortion Ban Bill Doesn't Represent Will Of The People, Planned Parenthood Says

By SONJA HUTSON

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When informed about current state abortion restrictions, 80% of residents said Utah does not need stricter abortion laws. That's according to a recent survey performed on behalf of three advocacy organizations.

Planned Parenthood Association of Utah, Alliance for a Better Utah, and the ACLU of Utah released the results Monday, the same day a bill was introduced to ban almost all abortions if courts allow it.

"Most Utahns understand that life is complex, circumstances are unique and our personal medical decisions should not be legislated," said Karrie Galloway, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Association of Utah.

Twenty-six percent of survey respondents said they identified as Republican. That's nearly half the percentage of registered Republicans in the state, according to the lieutenant governor's office. The percentage of Democrats surveyed is roughly the same as the percentage of registered Democrats in the state.

The three groups are opposed to the abortion ban bill. It is sponsored by Sen. Dan McCay, R-Riverton, and would ban all abortions in Utah except in cases of rape, incest, if the mother's life is at risk or if the fetus has a lethal defect or severe brain abnormality.

"I am hopeful that we are getting to a point that we no longer view favorably the killing of our unborn," McCay said. "That's the reason we brought this bill."

However, the bill only goes into effect if the U.S. Supreme Court rules that abortions at any stage can be outlawed by overturning Roe v. Wade. If the U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up that case, the bill would go into effect if the next lowest court in Utah ruled that abortions can be outlawed.

The state Legislature is considering two other abortion bills this session. One by Sen. Curt Bramble, R-Provo, would require medical providers to ask someone having a miscarriage or abortion whether they would like the fetus cremated or buried. It would also require medical facilities to bury or cremate the fetus instead of disposing of it with medical waste. The other bill, by Rep. Stephen Christiansen, R-West Jordan, would require ultrasounds with audible heartbeats before a patient received an abortion.

A bill to ban abortions in Utah after 18 weeks was signed into law last year, but has not gone into effect due to a lawsuit by a group of abortion rights groups.

Sonja Hutson covers politics for KUER. Follow her on Twitter @SonjaHutson