

# If Kentucky bans abortion, Planned Parenthood CEO says it will still find ways to help women

by [Deborah Yetter](#)

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Battling for abortion rights might seem a tough slog, especially in state like Kentucky where lawmakers have enacted multiple restrictions in recent years, including a ["trigger law"](#) to outlaw abortion should the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

But Rebecca Gibron, interim CEO of a six-state Planned Parenthood group that includes Kentucky, said her organization will keep fighting for reproductive rights even as she predicts the Supreme Court will overturn the 1973 landmark case that legalized abortion nationwide.

"If *Roe* is overturned, if Kentucky goes dark, we will still be here for our patients," Gibron said Wednesday while visiting the Planned Parenthood health clinic in Louisville. "Our responsibility and our concern for our patients is stronger than ever."

Meanwhile, the organization will continue to work against pending legislation in Kentucky it opposes, including [House Bill 3](#), a sweeping measure to impose new regulations on abortion, including medication abortions available early in a pregnancy.

And Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates has organized a [political issues committee](#) to raise money and fight a ballot measure in November to amend the state constitution to say there is no right to an abortion in Kentucky.

"We just have to keep up the fight," Gibron said. "Planned Parenthood isn't going

to go anywhere."

But neither are abortion opponents in Kentucky, who appear to have momentum on their side, with Republicans holding supermajorities in the state House and Senate and a potential Supreme Court decision that would give control back to states on abortion.

"We're at a pivotal time in our nation's history on many issues," said Addia Wuchner, executive director of Kentucky Right to Life.

Tuesday is "[Kentucky Right to Life Day](#)" at the Capitol with a 12:30 p.m. "Yes for Life" rally planned in in the Rotunda.

And Wuchner, a former member of the Kentucky General Assembly, said she hopes the Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade, leaving states to decide the matter.

"I've always been an advocate for states' rights," she said. "The legislative body is duly elected by the people of the commonwealth to make those laws that affect their citizens."

Wuchner said her organization will continue to support HB 3, the omnibus abortion measure filed by Rep. Nancy Tate, R- Brandenburg, as well as the constitutional amendment voters will decide Nov. 8.

Right to Life, through [Yes to Life](#), a political issues committee, also is raising money to get voters to answer 'yes' on the referendum.

Wuchner said when it comes to abortion, there simply isn't a way to bridge the differences between groups that support abortion rights and those, including Right to Life, who believe life starts at conception.

Should abortion become illegal in Kentucky, Wuchner said her organization would work to make sure women know their options.

"For me, choosing to eliminate the life of their child is not an option," she said.

She said she views Planned Parenthood as "misguided" if planning involves "eliminating a child's life."

Planned Parenthood believes women have the right to choose whether to be pregnant, Gibron said.

"Deciding whether to end a pregnancy is a deeply personal decision that should be made between a patient and their medical provider, not extreme politicians in Frankfort," Gibron said.

Planned Parenthood is one of two abortion providers in Kentucky. The other is EMW Women's Surgical Center in Louisville.

If abortion is outlawed in Kentucky, Planned Parenthood will work to assist women who want to terminate pregnancies, Gibron said.

"We are going to help our patients get the care they need and will help them navigate a safe pathway to care in other states," she said.

If Roe is overturned, about 25 states, including Kentucky and Indiana, are expected to outlaw abortion, about 13 through trigger laws similar to Kentucky's, and 12 by enacting legislation to ban it, Gibron said.

Gibron, based in Boise, Idaho, is head of a group of six Planned Parenthood state affiliates from Kentucky, Indiana, Hawaii, Alaska, Idaho and western Washington.

The clustering is a result in recent years of smaller organizations joining larger ones to pool staff and resources, she said.

Within her region, Indiana and Idaho stand to lose abortion services along with Kentucky if Roe v. Wade is overturned, she said.

But for now, the procedure remains legal, which is the message Planned Parenthood hopes to spread while awaiting the Supreme Court ruling expected this summer, Gibron said.

Her visit to Louisville last week was aimed at meeting with other abortion rights organizations and alerting the community that the Supreme Court could very well end access to the procedure in many states.

"So many people in this country do not believe this is real," she said. "They actually don't believe the Supreme Court is going to overturn it."

But Gibron thinks it's highly likely with the new conservative majority on the high court.

"I think they are going to overturn it," she said. "I think we are going to end up in the dark days before Roe."

Reach Deborah Yetter at [dyetter@courier-journal.com](mailto:dyetter@courier-journal.com). Find her on Twitter at [@d\\_yetter](https://twitter.com/d_yetter). Support strong local journalism by subscribing today: [www.courier-journal.com/subscribe](http://www.courier-journal.com/subscribe).

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### Even if 'Roe' falls, Planned Parenthood CEO vows to keep up abortion fight

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Rebecca Gibron is the interim CEO of the regional Planned Parenthood group that includes Kentucky.  
*Deborah Yetter*

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Addia Wuchner, as a state legislator, in 2018 spoke against a challenge to a state abortion law outside the Federal Courthouse in Louisville. *Matt Stone/Louisville Courier Journal*

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Planned Parenthood office in Louisville *Courier Journal*

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*Reach Deborah Yetter at [dyetter@courier-journal.com](mailto:dyetter@courier-journal.com). Find her on Twitter at [@d\\_yetter](#). Support strong local journalism by subscribing today: [www.courier-journal.com/subscribe](http://www.courier-journal.com/subscribe).*

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LOCAL

# Abortion foes rally in downtown Louisville for Roe V. Wade anniversary

Louisville Courier Journal

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A crowd of around 80 people stood at the steps of Louisville Metro Hall while listening to former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft speak out against abortion during a Right to Life rally commemorating the 49th anniversary of Roe v Wade. Jan. 21, 2022 Jeff Faughender/Courier Journal

Dozens of abortion opponents rallied on the steps of Louisville's Metro Hall Friday as part of a rally commemorating the 49th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld a woman's right to end her pregnancy.

The rally, hosted by Right to Life of Louisville, took place at noon in downtown Louisville, with scheduled speakers that included Kelly Craft, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; Republican Metro Council member Anthony Piagentini; Rob Givens, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul's state director; Irina Baptiste of the

Cuban-American Association of Kentucky; and deacon Stephen Smith of the Archdiocese of Louisville.

Kentucky has taken steps in recent years to curb or eliminate access to abortion, requiring patients to visit a doctor or other health provider to obtain medication to terminate an early pregnancy.



Members of the Sacred Heart Academy Youth For Life Club had their photo taken as they held up a sign near the steps of Louisville Metro Hall. Right to Life of Louisville hosted the rally to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Roe v Wade. January 21, 2022 Jeff Faughender/Courier Journal

A Kentucky lawmaker is also seeking to outlaw abortion medication by mail — as Texas did Dec. 1 — a move that would further blunt any impact of recent action by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration lifting a requirement for an in-person medical visit.

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America is bracing for a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court in a Mississippi abortion law dispute that has sparked speculation the court's new conservative

