

Court reinstates most Texas abortion restrictions

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In this July 15, 2013 file photo, two signs that read "Who Lobbied For This?" and "We Need Healthcare Options, Not Obstacles" are held by attendees of a rally in front of Dallas city hall where a group of nearly 200 gathered to protest the approval of sweeping new restrictions on abortion in Texas. A U.S. appeals court on Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013, issued a ruling reinstating most of Texas' tough new abortion restrictions, which means as many as 12 clinics will not be able to perform the procedure starting as soon as Friday. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez, File)

A U.S. appeals court on Thursday issued a ruling reinstating most of Texas' tough new abortion restrictions, which means as many as 12 clinics won't be able to perform the procedure starting as soon as Friday.

A panel of judges at the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals said the law requiring doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital can take effect while a lawsuit moves forward. The restrictions could take effect Friday.

The fight over the restrictions drew international attention earlier this year when a female legislator, Wendy Davis, staged a half-day speech against them in June.

"This unanimous decision is a vindication of the careful deliberation by the Texas Legislature to craft a law to protect the health and safety of Texas women," Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, a Republican who is running for governor, said in a written statement.

Texas is one of a number of conservative-leaning states that seek to limit the right of women to have an abortion that was established in a landmark 1973 Supreme Court ruling. The state's restrictions are among the toughest in the nation.

Lawyers for abortion providers have argued that the restrictions do not protect women and would shut down a third of the abortion clinics in Texas.



In this Oct. 29, 2013 file photo, Dottie and Tom Knodell, opponents of abortion, hold signs outside a Planned Parenthood Clinic, in San Antonio. A U.S. appeals court on Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013, issued a ruling reinstating most of Texas' tough new abortion restrictions, which means as many as 12 clinics will not be able to perform the procedure starting as soon as Friday. (AP Photo/Eric Gay, File)

In a statement Thursday, Planned Parenthood said the [appeals court](#) decision means "abortion will no longer be available in vast stretches of Texas."

"This fight is far from over," Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards said in the statement. "This restriction clearly violates Texas women's constitutional rights by drastically reducing access to safe and legal abortion statewide

The court's order is temporary until it can hold a complete hearing, likely in January.

Many hospitals with religious affiliations will not allow [abortion](#) doctors to work there, while others fear protests if they provide privileges. Many have requirements that doctors live within a certain radius of the facility.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott had made an emergency appeal to the conservative 5th Circuit, arguing that the law is a constitutional use of the Legislature's authority.

The court's order is temporary until it can hold a complete hearing, likely in January.

The law also bans abortions at 20 weeks of pregnancy and, beginning in October 2014, requires doctors to perform all abortions in surgical facilities.

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