

Indiana signs law effectively banning abortion

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The Republican governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, signed a bill into law effectively banning all abortions after 10 weeks of pregnancy. The bill was passed along party lines and marks the first abortion ban passed after *Roe v. Wade* was struck down by the far-right U.S. Supreme Court. Indiana joins nine other states which have effectively banned abortion. Abortion access is under threat or already overturned in half of the states in the country.

This shift reflected the increasing turn by the ruling class and both its main political parties away from democratic pretenses to open attacks on democratic rights and increasingly authoritarian forms of rule, with similar shifts occurring around the country.

A number of states which have passed so-called “trigger laws” allowing anti-abortion legislation to go back into effect when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, while others do not have trigger laws but do still have anti-abortion laws on the books, such as Arizona, where a 15-week abortion ban is going into effect this fall while the Republican state attorney general is trying to enforce a stricter 1901 anti-abortion law. Michigan, West Virginia and Wisconsin have similar anti-abortion laws dating from the early 20th century back to before the Civil War still on the books.

The passage of the Indiana law takes place just weeks after a 10-year-old rape victim in Ohio traveled several hours to Indiana to get an abortion due to Ohio’s abortion ban, which has no exception for rape of any sort. The right-wing press initially claimed the incident was made up by the Indianapolis doctor who reported it and performed the procedure. The Democratic Party-aligned media accommodated this smear, with the *Washington Post* casting doubt on the doctor and criticizing the *Indianapolis Star* for publishing the story.

The ban, set to take effect on September 15, provides exceptions for rape and incest, in case the mother’s

health or life is at risk, and if the fetus is diagnosed with a lethal abnormality, though not for fetuses that are physically and/or developmentally challenged. Under the law, a doctor performing an illegal abortion or who fails to file required reports on the abortion will lose his or her medical license.

The law will cause all abortion clinics to lose their licenses, as the bill only permits hospitals or outpatient centers of hospitals to perform abortions, drastically reducing the already sparse access to the procedure even under the extremely limited circumstances permitted under the new law.

The Biden White House released a perfunctory statement on Saturday calling the law “another radical step by Republican legislators to take away women’s reproductive rights and freedom.” The three-paragraph statement was delivered by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre—apparently it did not even warrant an appearance by President Joe Biden—showing the unseriousness with which the Democrats approach the matter of a whole state effectively banning abortions. This echoes the Democrats’ role in the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and their subsequent confining of their “opposition” to appeals to elect more Democrats.

The *Washington Post* wrote that “Democrats are hopeful, though, that they can use what happened in Indiana to cast the entire Republican Party as extreme on abortion.” That is, the Democrats will cynically exploit the result of decades of their own fecklessness and complicity in the attack on women’s right to an abortion to elect more Democrats, who will again proceed to do nothing.

The number of abortion facilities has been declining for decades in Indiana, following repeated attacks by the far-right anti-abortion zealots in and around the Republican Party. The number of abortion clinics decreased from 30 in 1982 to 9 in 2014, and then to 6 in 2017. The total number of abortion facilities in the

state sat at 9 in 2017, according to the Guttmacher Institute, with 96 percent of all Indiana counties lacking abortion-providing clinics and 70 percent of all Indiana women living in those counties. The recent bill codifies and further escalates the campaign against abortion.

IU Health, the largest health care system in the state, said that it was studying the law in order to “incorporate changes into our medical practice to protect our providers and care for the people seeking reproductive healthcare.”

Like many other Republican-ruled states, Indiana has been involved in numerous attacks against women’s right to an abortion, with a state law being passed banning abortion after 22 weeks under the false and anti-scientific claim that fetuses feel pain. Other efforts include, but are not limited to, attacking abortion facility licensing through the Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) provision in 2013, passing legislation in 2007 requiring mothers to be given “informed consent” on the procedure before being able to receive access to abortion (a euphemism for anti-abortion propaganda) and banning abortions of children with detected disabilities.

The corporate media has lamely attempted to paint sections of big business as opposing the abortion bans.

One central corporate figure listed is pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Co., which warned in a statement Saturday that the law would harm Indiana’s “ability to attract diverse scientific, engineering and business talent from around the world.” The company made arrangements for employee health care coverage to include expenses for traveling out of state for an abortion.

Eli Lilly and Co. has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars through its political action committee (PAC) to both Democratic and Republican candidates each election cycle, including \$395,417 for the 2022 cycle for Republican candidates, \$58,400 to the Republican National Committee (the central organ of the Republican Party), and \$66,000 to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Lilly’s supposed “opposition” to the attacks on abortion is purely on the basis of immediate business concerns.

Sections of big business are worried about the pace at which the ban was preceding, with the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, a representative agency of big businesses in the state capital, warning in a Thursday

statement: “Such an expedited legislative process—rushing to advance state policy on broad, complex issues—is, at best, detrimental to Hoosiers, and at worst, reckless.”

Roughly translated, sections of big business are concerned with the rate at which attacks on abortion are progressing, not the actual attacks, because of their potential to inflame existing mass opposition among workers, already near the breaking point with rising inflation, declining real wages and the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic which continues to kill thousands every week.



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