# South Dakota Voters Decide Fate of Abortion Rights in Fall Ballot Initiative



South Dakota voters will determine the future of abortion rights in the state this fall as a ballot initiative gained sufficient support to advance. The state’s top election official confirmed on Thursday that about 85% of the over 55,000 signatures submitted by advocates were valid, surpassing the necessary 35,017 signatures needed. The proposed amendment would prohibit the state from regulating abortions before the end of the first trimester and allow regulation only after the second trimester, with exceptions to protect the life or health of the woman.

This initiative follows the 2022 US Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe v. Wade, leading to a trigger law in South Dakota banning nearly all abortions. The advocacy group Dakotans for Health, which sponsored the amendment, emphasized the importance of allowing South Dakota residents, rather than politicians, to make this decision.

South Dakota currently outlaws all abortions except to save the life of the mother. Despite the initiative making it to the ballot, it faces considerable opposition from Republican lawmakers and some major abortion rights advocates. The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota expressed concerns about the amendment’s legal strength, suggesting it might be only symbolic. Opponents have until June 17 to file any challenges with the secretary of state’s office.

State ballot measures on abortion rights are also present in Florida and Maryland, with efforts still ongoing in states such as Arizona, Montana, and Nebraska. Seven other states have already approved similar measures.