# Colorado and South Dakota Set to Feature Abortion Rights Measures on State Ballots



On May 17, 2024, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed several bills aimed at bolstering abortion and gender-affirming care rights. Following the signature event, measures regarding abortion rights will appear on statewide ballots in Colorado and South Dakota this fall.

Colorado's initiative, which secured its spot on the ballot on May 17, 2024, seeks to embed abortion protections within the state constitution. The state already maintains broad abortion rights and has become a haven for those from more restrictive areas, especially Texas. Advocates in Colorado gathered over 225,000 signatures, almost doubling the 124,000 required to place the measure on the ballot. Amending the state constitution will need approval from 55% of voters.

South Dakota's measure emerged after the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 reversal of Roe v. Wade, resulting in a trigger law that bans most abortions in the state. About 85% of the more than 55,000 signatures collected in South Dakota were validated, surpassing the required 35,017. The ballot measure will ask voters to decide on restricting state interference in abortions within the first trimester while allowing regulations after the second trimester, except for cases preserving the woman's life or health.

These measures underscore the ongoing national debate on abortion rights, with similar initiatives appearing on ballots in Florida and Maryland and efforts underway in states like Arizona, Montana, and Nebraska.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota has expressed concerns about the potential symbolic nature of the measure without enforceable legal standards. Meanwhile, abortion opponents, including the Life Defense Fund, continue to scrutinize the signature collections until the challenge window closes on June 17, 2024.