

Abortion

Aftermath of passing new law  
Texas women drive hours for abortions

SHREVEPORT, La., Oct 14, (AP): The 33-year-old Texas woman drove alone four hours through the night to get to the Louisiana abortion clinic for a consultation. She initially planned to sleep in her car, but an advocacy group helped arrange a hotel room.

Single and with three children ranging from 5 to 13, she worried that adding a baby now would take time, food, money and space away from her three children. She doesn't have a job, and without help from groups offering a safe abortion, she said, she probably would have sought another way to end her pregnancy.

"If you can't get rid of the baby, what's the next thing you're going to do? You're going to try to get rid of it yourself. So I'm thinking: 'What could I do? What are some home remedies that I could do to get rid of this baby, to have a miscarriage, to abort it?' And it shouldn't be like that. I shouldn't have to do that. I shouldn't have to think like that, feel like that, none of that."



Trump

"We have to be heard. This has got to change. It's not right."

She was one of more than a dozen women who arrived Saturday at the Hope Medical Group for Women, a single-story brick building with covered windows just south of downtown Shreveport. Some came alone. Others were accompanied by a friend or a partner. Some brought their children because they were unable to get child care.

All were seeking to end pregnancies, and most were from neighboring Texas, where the nation's most restrictive abortion law remains in effect. It prohibits abortions once cardiac activity is detected, after about six weeks, before many women even know they are pregnant. It makes no exceptions for rape or incest. As a result, abortion clinics in surrounding states are being inundated with Texas women.

The women agreed to speak to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity so they could talk openly about their experiences.

Like many of the others, the 33-year-old Texas mother said she tried to schedule an abortion closer to home, but she was too far along. By the time she arrived at the clinic for the abortion on Saturday, she was just past nine weeks and had to undergo a surgical abortion rather than using medication. She said the ordeal left her angry with the Texas politicians who passed the law.

"If I had to keep this baby, ain't no telling what would've happened. I probably would've went crazy, and they don't understand that," she said, her voice filled with emotion.

A 25-year-old woman made the 70-mile trip south from Texarkana, on the border of Texas and Arkansas. She said she was already five weeks along before she realized she was pregnant, and she knew it would be impossible to schedule the required two visits at a Texas clinic. By the time she was able to make an appointment in Shreveport, her pregnancy was almost too advanced for a medication abortion.

"Luckily I found out when I did, because then I was still able to take the pill rather than the surgery," she said. While she was at the clinic, her husband waited for hours in the car with her young son, who is a toddler and is still breastfeeding. They had no one to watch him.

The Texas law has been bouncing between courts for weeks. The Biden administration urged the courts again Monday to suspend it. That effort came three days after a federal appeals court reinstated the law following a blistering lower-court ruling that created a brief 48-hour window last week in which Texas abortion providers rushed to bring in patients again.

The anti-abortion campaign that fueled the law aims to reach the US Supreme Court, where abortion opponents hope the conservative coalition assembled under President Donald Trump will end the constitutional right to abortion established by the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling.

As most of the women entered the clinic's parking lot, they were met by anti-abortion protesters, mostly from East Texas, who regularly make the trip to Shreveport.

John Powers, 44, a machinist from Jacksonville, Texas, said he typically makes the nearly two-hour drive twice a month with the goal of getting any woman to change her mind. In the 13 years he's been protesting outside clinics, he says he's convinced two women not to go through with their abortions, which he calls "turnarounds."

"I'm not going to say it happens a lot," said Powers, who has six children and supports any law that makes it harder for women to get an abortion. "Let's say I never have another turnaround, that one baby that can now grow up and marry and have her own children, go to school and maybe become a journalist. That'd be worth it, easily worth it to me."



US President Joe Biden delivers remarks on efforts to address global supply chain bottlenecks during an event in the East Room of the White House, Oct 13, in Washington. (AP)

Politics

Majority leader warns quarreling Dems

Put aside differences: Schumer

WASHINGTON, Oct 14, (AP): Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer warned fellow Democrats on Thursday they "must put aside our differences" as the party struggles to coalesce around President Joe Biden's huge but now-scaled-back package of social services and climate change strategies.

Schumer's letter to colleagues comes as progressive leaders in Congress are steering them away from what the progressives call a "false choice" over what to keep or cut as Democrats labor to trim what had been a \$3.5 trillion proposal to about \$2 trillion.

"As with any bill of such historic proportions, not every member will get everything he or she wants," Schumer wrote.

The New York Democrat implored his colleagues to "find the common ground."

With the calendar slipping toward a new deadline, the Democrats who control Congress are facing mounting pressure to reach a deal or risk the collapse of Biden's signature domestic policy undertaking.

The debate that has been raging behind the scenes is now spilling into public as Biden and his allies in Congress hit another impasse, working to chisel the legislation to a still sizable sum - all to be paid for with taxes on

corporations and the wealthy. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has warned that "difficult decisions" must be made to reach consensus ahead of a self-imposed Oct. 31 deadline for passage.

Progressive leaders in their own letter to Pelosi, Biden and Schumer, argued the package should not simply be narrowed as centrist lawmakers prefer, but instead kept as Biden's bigger vision but for fewer than 10 years - "shorter, transformative investments" that could be started quickly and then revisited.

"Much has been made in recent weeks about the compromises necessary to enact this transformative agenda," wrote Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., and other leaders of the 96-member progressive caucus in their Wednesday letter.

"We have been told that we can either adequately fund a small number of investments or legislate broadly, but only make a shallow, short-term impact. We would argue that this is a false choice."

Republicans are dead set against the package. So Biden and his party are left to deliberate among themselves, with all eyes still on two key holdouts, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, whose votes are crucial in the evenly

divided Senate. But that is leading to tough questions: Should Biden keep the sweep of his proposals - free childcare and community college; dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors - or scale back to a few key health and education programs that could be more permanent?

The progressives have held great sway so far in the debate, but unless Manchin and Sinema come on board, there is no clear path to a deal, risking its collapse.

In their letter Wednesday, the progressives said their constituents are depending on them to deliver on the far-ranging package of health care, childcare, family leave, education and other investments, including those to fight climate change.

The idea, the progressives said, is to start the programs "as quickly as possible," but for shorter durations, with lawmakers free to campaign in the future for their renewal.

"This will help make the case for our party's ability to govern, and establish a track record of success that will pave the way for a long-term extension of benefit," they wrote.

They also argued against linking the programs to low or modest income levels, saying all Americans should be able to benefit.



Rep. Mark Finchem of Arizona, gestures as he speaks during an election rally in Richmond, Va., Wednesday, Oct 13, 2021. Conservative radio host John Fredericks, a former Trump campaign chairman in Virginia, organized the "Take Back Virginia Rally" that drew at least a few hundred people in the Richmond suburbs to fire up the GOP's right wing in the runup to the Nov. 2 elections. (AP)

America

**Biden to meet Pope:** President Joe Biden is set to meet Pope Francis when he visits the Vatican later this month as part of a five-day swing through Italy and the U.K. for global economic and climate change meetings.

Biden plans to discuss the coronavirus pandemic, the climate crisis and poverty during his meeting with the pope, according to the White House. The meeting will take place on Oct. 29, and Biden will then attend two-day summit of G-20 leaders in Rome, before heading to Glasgow, Scotland for the U.N. climate conference known as COP26.

Biden, who is Roman Catholic, often speaks of his faith in public and attends Mass every weekend. But his political views, including his support for gay marriage and abortion rights, have at times put him at odds with Catholic doctrine and brought controversy and criticism from some leaders of the Catholic church. (AP)

**Senate mounts new push:** Senate Democrats are set to try again to advance a sweeping elections and voting overhaul bill, testing objections from Republicans with a vote planned for next week, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced Thursday.

In a letter to colleagues, Schumer, D-N.Y., said Republicans "must come to the table" to at least open debate on the bill. Weeks in the making, the new version was

drafted in hopes of winning over support at a time when states continue mounting obstacles to voting.

If the Republican senators have ideas "on how to improve the legislation, we are prepared to hear them, debate them, and if they are in line with the goals of the legislation, include them in the bill," Schumer said.

He challenged Republicans not to oppose the measure, blocking it with a filibuster, and "at the very least, vote to open debate." (AP)



Pope Francis



Schumer

**Bannon defies subpoena:** A congressional committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection could soon prepare criminal contempt charges against former White House aide Steve Bannon as he defies a subpoena for documents and testimony about his interactions with President Donald Trump ahead of the violent siege of the Capitol.

The committee scheduled a Thursday deposition with Bannon, but his lawyer has said that at Trump's direction he won't appear. (AP)

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