

Wisconsin Department of Justice: AG Schimel seeks to reinstate Unborn Child Abuse Law

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MADISON, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced his decision to ask the United States Court of Appeals to reinstate Wisconsin's Unborn Child Abuse Law.

On Wednesday, U.S. District Judge James Peterson, sitting in Madison, Wisconsin, refused to stay his April 28 decision striking down Wisconsin's law, which provides drug addiction treatment services to pregnant women. Attorney General Schimel will now ask the Court of Appeals in Chicago to stay that lower court decision.

"I've spent a large part of my law enforcement career, both as AG and Waukesha DA, fighting drug abuse to make our state healthier and stronger. There is no question Wisconsin faces an epidemic of drug abuse, especially from heroin and now a growing crisis with meth," said Attorney General Schimel. "This law allows the State to provide critical services to pregnant women, and contains important tools to protect unborn children in imminent danger. The law has served Wisconsin well for nearly 20 years, and it deserves to be vigorously defended beyond just the U.S. District Court in Madison."

The attorneys targeting this law have argued that Wisconsin's law is unneeded because, among other reasons, they claim drug use by pregnant women does not harm unborn children, and that there is no definitive proof that meth, heroin, and cocaine harm unborn children.

"Those attorneys have obviously never talked with those who work in the neonatal intensive care units at hospitals across our state who report dramatic increases in

the babies being born drug-addicted. Drug abuse is harmful to all humans, and is particularly bad for babies. What those addicted babies experience is horrifying. Addiction to drugs like opiates, cocaine, and meth requires treatment. Pregnant women—and their unborn babies—should have every opportunity to get the treatment-related services provided by this important law,” remarked Attorney General Schimel.

The Court of Appeals is expected to rule on the request for a stay in the coming weeks.