

Senate approves bill requiring health care professionals to provide care to babies that survive abortion

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The state Senate today voted along party lines to approve legislation that would require health care professionals to provide care to babies that survive an abortion.

The bill, approved 19-12, is similar to legislation Gov. Tony Evers vetoed in 2019. At the time, Evers said the legislation was duplicative and there were already similar protections in state law.

GOP state Sen. Roger Roth, one of the bill's co-authors, said Evers got "bad advice" when he said two years ago there were existing protections for infants that survive an abortion attempt. He said the additional legislation was needed to clarify state law and questioned how anyone could oppose its intent, saying no child should be denied care regardless of their "path to birth."

"It is time for our Legislature to stand up and affirm the universal truth that all life matters," said Roth, R-Appleton.

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But Sen. Kelda Roys, D-Madison, accused GOP backers of pushing the bill as part of a pattern of lying about abortion. Roys also took aim at her GOP colleagues, accusing them of failing to show they care about children in other ways. Roys recently gave birth and said her GOP colleagues were insensitive for failing to wear masks during session days when they were on the floor together despite studies showing the risks that COVID poses to pregnant women and their fetuses.

"Ultimately, the goal is to ban all abortions and turn Wisconsin into the next Texas," Roys said.

The legislation would have to pass both houses before it could go to Evers' desk. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, has indicated his chamber plans to take up the bill this fall.