

WisDems: Republican candidates for governor stake out most extreme position on abortion

Posted on Thursday, Mar 24, 2022

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Kleefisch, Nicholson, and Ramthun All Support Banning Abortions With No Exceptions, Would Let 1849 Ban Stay If Roe Is Overturned

MADISON, Wis. - Access to health care is on the ballot in 2022, and if any of the candidates in the Republican primary become governor, Wisconsin could see an 1849 ban on abortion go into effect.

[The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported](#) today that Rebecca Kleefisch, Kevin Nicholson, and Tim Ramthun all “want to ban most abortions and say they do not want to create exceptions for rape and incest.”

If Roe vs. Wade is overturned by the Supreme Court, Wisconsin could turn back the clock to 1849 with legislation that made most abortions illegal.

Kleefisch already has a record of radical work against abortion access from her time as lieutenant governor, when she helped [take away critical reproductive health care services from Wisconsinites](#). She also [has agreed](#) that survivors of rape should “turn lemons into lemonade.”

During his last failed campaign, Nicholson received a perfect “100 percent” rating from the group Pro-Life Wisconsin, with Nicholson promising to support all of their demands, including banning abortion “[in all cases](#),” with no exceptions for rape, incest, or when a mother’s life is in jeopardy.

And last but not least, Ramthun once voted against a bill banning abortion in Wisconsin [because it wasn’t extreme enough](#).

[It’s not just abortion that’s at stake - these candidates’ extreme agenda for our health care](#) could outlaw forms of contraception, jeopardize fertility treatments like IVF, and strip access to basic health care for tens of thousands of Wisconsinites, including cancer screenings, birth control, and STD testing and treatment.

Access to abortion is one of the [clearest contrasts between the Republican candidates and Governor Evers](#), who wants to make it easy to safely access an abortion and has stood as a strong line of defense against bills that attack reproductive rights.

Read more about how Republicans want to roll back reproductive rights in Wisconsin below.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Wisconsin candidates for governor offer sharp differences on abortion as Supreme Court weighs the future of the procedure](#)

Abortion could wind up as a central issue in the race for governor.

The U.S. Supreme Court this summer will decide whether to keep in place the Roe v. Wade decision. A ruling overturning it could immediately reinstate Wisconsin's 19th-century law banning almost all abortions.

Democratic Gov. Tony Evers said he believes abortion should be easily accessible. His Republican opponents want to ban most abortions and say they do not want to create exceptions for rape and incest.

The issue offers one of the starkest differences between Evers and his opponents.

[...]

The Republicans running for governor — former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, management consultant Kevin Nicholson and state Rep. Timothy Ramthun — don't want to create additional exceptions if Wisconsin's abortion ban is reinstated.

"I would see no change and I would be happy that we would be protecting the unborn," Kleefisch said when asked if she would want to create exemptions from an abortion ban for rape, incest or the health of a woman.

Nicholson struck a similar tone.

"Whatever legislation moves the ball forward and protecting more innocent life, I'm for it. And so I'm not looking to add exceptions to anything," he said in an interview.

Ramthun in [a campaign video](#) said he opposed any exceptions to an abortion ban.

"I am hardcore, 100% pro-life without exceptions," he said.

"Every child conceived should not have to pay — should not have to pay — for the sins of their parents. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is a right we should all have from conception to the day we stop breathing and go to the lord and everywhere in between."

[...]

Evers would likely veto any new limits while his opponents would welcome them.

Texas recently adopted a law that limits abortion when a fetal heartbeat can be detected, around six weeks. Prosecutors and other government officials can't

enforce the ban, but private individuals can receive bounties if they sue doctors who perform abortions and those who help women obtain them.

The law was set up that way to make it harder to bring a lawsuit to block the ban. The approach has worked in that the ban has gone into place even though it is at odds with Roe and other court decisions.

Kleefisch and Nicholson said they supported banning abortion at six weeks but not the provision that allows private citizens to bring lawsuits.

[...]

Ramthun in February joined about two dozen other Republican lawmakers in co-sponsoring [a Texas-style bill](#) that would allow private citizens to sue doctors who perform abortions after a fetal heartbeat can be detected. The bill never made it to the floor of the Assembly or Senate before the legislative session ended this month.

Evers has broadly supported abortion rights. When he first ran for governor in 2018, Evers said if abortion were banned in Wisconsin, he would pardon doctors who performed the procedure. He said then that he would veto legislation to ban abortion after six weeks.

During his time in office, Evers has [vetoed legislation](#) that would ban abortions based on sex, reduce government funding for organizations that offer abortion services and give lifetime prison sentences to doctors if they do not provide medical care to babies who are born after attempted abortions. Evers has said Wisconsin already has laws in place to ensure doctors who don't provide medical care are prosecuted.

"I've said it before, and I'll say it again today: as long as I'm governor, I will veto any legislation that turns back the clock on reproductive rights in this state — and that's a promise," Evers said in a written statement he issued in December when he vetoed abortion restrictions.

[...]