

Planned Parenthood aiming to resume abortions in Sheboygan in face of prosecution risk

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Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin's leader says the organization is working to soon resume abortions in Sheboygan County, despite DA Joel Urmanski indicating he would consider prosecuting providers under the state's 1849 law currently before the courts.

"While DA Urmanski may disagree with what the judge said, it is crystal clear that the statute does not apply to voluntary abortion, and so we would be able to resume those services in Sheboygan as well," President and CEO Tanya Atkinson said on WISN's "UpFront," which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics. "We are looking toward how we can logistically resume services again in Sheboygan. We want to make sure the scheduling and the logistics really make it both accessible and meaningful."

Wisconsin's 1849 law is currently being challenged in court. Dane County Circuit Court Judge Diane Schlipper recently indicated she believed the law applied to feticide and not abortion, which prompted Planned Parenthood to resume abortions in Milwaukee and Dane counties as the lawsuit is active.

"As of this date, my office has not received any referrals of alleged violations of Wis. Stat. 940.04(1) by an individual performing a consensual abortion," Urmanski wrote in a Sept. 15 affidavit. "Were I to receive such a referral, I would determine whether the case is worthy of prosecution, but I do believe I could lawfully initiate a prosecution."

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Atkinson says Planned Parenthood has no concerns surrounding Urmanski's position.

"We are very confident in our decision to resume services," she said.

The case is expected to make it to the Wisconsin Supreme Court where liberals now hold a 4-3 majority. Atkinson said she doesn't believe any justice should recuse themselves from the case.

Justice Janet Protasiewicz made clear her support for abortion rights on the campaign trail. Justice Brian Hagedorn previously called Planned Parenthood a "wicked organization" before taking the bench.

"It's not necessary for any justice to recuse themselves," Atkinson said. "Certainly we are aware of the machinations that are happening between the Legislature, they're contemplating actions related to the Supreme Court, but we don't think there's any need for anybody to recuse themselves."

Joseph Neu, president of UAW Local 75 representing local striking Stellantis employees in Milwaukee, says he's negotiating for contract language to ensure the plant remains open.

"This is a serious threat," Neu told "UpFront." "That would devastate here. That would close here and also close a plant in Chicago."

Stellantis plants in Milwaukee and Hudson are part of the nationwide parts distribution centers on strike as part of the nationwide strike. Part of the union's demands include a 40% pay increase over a number of years and a 32-hour work week.

"Wages and hours are always everything," Neu said. "That can be negotiated. I'm a stickler because wages mean nothing without a job."

Neu said politicians seeking labor's endorsement ahead of the 2024 elections won't necessarily fall along party lines.

"Every time politics comes up onto an election year, you see it more than anything," Neu said. "It's who works. You heard back what (Shawn) Fain said, you've got to win his endorsement. He ain't giving no endorsements. Who helps him, that's who's getting it. Same with my locals too. We're endorsing who's going

to do the best for us. That's what we've got to look for."

Fain is UAW president.

Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh says Travis King, the Wisconsin soldier who is back in the U.S. after willingly running into North Korea, will continue undergoing medical and mental health evaluations at an Army medical facility in San Antonio, Texas.

"We know he was in good spirits when he boarded the plane back to the United States," Singh told "UpFront." "I believe he's being cooperative with the U.S. military officials in San Antonio, but I would really let him and his family speak for more on how he's doing."

North Korea expelled King last week without public explanation after being held in the country for 70 days.

Questions now remain surrounding what type of punishment King may now face. Before crossing into North Korea, King had just been released from a South Korean prison on assault charges and set to return to Fort Bliss, Texas where he faced a potential discharge.

"I'll really let the Army speak to what could happen down the line," Singh said. "That's not our focus right now."

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