

Alabama lawmakers pass another contentious abortion bill

May 23 (UPI) — A week after Alabama passed one of the United States' most restrictive anti-abortion laws, state lawmakers approved a proposal that criminalizes doctors who don't make every effort to save a baby's life in the event of a failed abortion.

The Alabama House passed the proposed law by a vote of 66-18 Tuesday, which now heads to the Senate.

If signed into law, the bill requires physicians to perform life-saving procedures to aid fetuses after failed abortions. If they fail to comply, doctors face up to 20 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine. Debate over the new bill was as sharply divided as the "heartbeat" law the chamber passed last week.

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Critics of the bill argued that it's unnecessary and politically-motivated, since late-term abortions in Alabama are already illegal.

"The situation still exists to where it could still happen," Rep. Ginny Shaver, the bill's author, replied.

Gov. Kay Ivey signed the "heartbeat" law May 15, which bans nearly all abortions and imposes a penalty of up to 99 years in prison for doctors who perform abortions when a fetal heartbeat is detectable.

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Shaver said she was inspired to write the bill after hearing stories about failed abortions, but Democratic Rep. Merika Coleman said that's hearsay with no supporting testimony or statistics on the rate of late-term abortions in Alabama.

"I think it's irresponsible for us as a legislature to pass laws when we don't have the data that actually backs it up," Coleman said.

The Alabama bills are part of a growing national movement by conservatives to outlaw abortion — which aims to get the issue before the U.S. Supreme Court for a possible dismissal of *Roe vs. Wade*, the landmark 1973 ruling that legalized the

procedure nationwide. Thousands of demonstrators on Tuesday staged rallies in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., in support of abortion rights.

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