

U.S. appeals court allows Texas to resume ban on most abortions

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A three-judge Fifth Circuit panel gave the Justice Department until Tuesday to respond to Texas's filings

New Orleans, October 9 (RHC)-- A U.S. federal appeals court ruled Friday that Texas could resume its ban on most abortions, two days after another court suspended the ban. The ruling by the New Orleans-based court came as clinics in Texas resumed providing abortions for the first time since the law – prohibiting abortions beyond around six weeks – came into effect in September.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton appealed earlier on Friday the ruling by U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman in Austin, preventing the state from enforcing the Republican-backed law, which prohibits women from obtaining an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, while litigation over its legality continues.

The case is part of a fierce legal battle over access to abortion in the US, with numerous states trying to enforce restrictions on the procedure. President Joe Biden's administration brought forward a challenge to the Texas law after the U.S. Supreme Court had allowed it to go into effect.

Biden's Justice Department sued Texas on September 9 and sought a temporary injunction against the law, arguing during an October 1 hearing that the measure violates the U.S. Constitution.

The U.S. Supreme Court on September 1 allowed the law to take effect in a 5-4 vote led by conservative justices.

At six weeks of pregnancy, many women do not even know they are pregnant. The law makes no exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape or incest. The Texas law enables citizens to enforce the ban, rewarding them with at least \$10,000 if they successfully sue anyone who helps provide an abortion after foetal cardiac activity is detected. Critics of the law have said this provision lets people act as anti-abortion bounty hunters.

The Justice Department argued that the law impedes women from exercising their constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy that was recognised in the Supreme Court's Roe v Wade decision. The 1973 landmark ruling legalised abortion across the United States.

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