

# DETROIT

# NATIVE SUN

## Gov. Whitmer takes action to block enforcement of 1931 abortion ban

LANISING, Mich. — Governor Gretchen Whitmer took immediate action to protect access to abortion in Michigan after the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled today that county prosecutors can enforce the state's extreme 1931 law that criminalizes abortion without exceptions for rape or incest and punishes doctors and nurses who offer reproductive health care. The governor's request for a temporary restraining order builds on her ongoing efforts to protect abortion in Michigan after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v Jackson* overturning a 49-year precedent set by *Roe v Wade*.

"Today's dangerous decision by the Michigan Court of Appeals clears a path for county prosecutors to use Michigan's extreme 1931 abortion ban to prosecute doctors and nurses and jail them for doing their jobs," said Governor Whitmer. "That is why I have taken immediate action and filed a request for a temporary restraining order against enforcement. We cannot risk further confusion for women, health care providers, and all Michiganders. As today's unexpected action proves, the overturn of *Roe v Wade* in June has left reproductive freedom hanging by a thread in Michigan. I have taken a number of unprecedented steps to protect the 2.2 million women in Michigan who would lose the right to control their own bodies. I will keep fighting like hell to protect women and health care providers."

### Governor Whitmer's Actions to Protect Reproductive Freedom

- April 7: Filed a lawsuit to ask the Michigan Supreme Court to immediately resolve whether Michigan's constitution protects the right to an abortion.
- April 7: Penned an op-ed in the Detroit Free Press explaining her action and highlighting that 7 in 10 Michiganders support the rights affirmed by *Roe*.
- May 3: Joined 16 other states to urge the United States Senate to pass the Women's Health Protection Act and enshrine *Roe*'s protections in federal law.
- May 9: Penned an op-ed in the New York Times explaining why she isn't waiting for Congress to act and urging fellow pro-choice governors, state representatives, private businesses, and citizens to take action to protect reproductive rights.

- May 25: Signed an executive directive instructing state of Michigan departments and agencies to identify and assess opportunities to increase protections for reproductive healthcare, such as contraception. The executive directive also instructs departments not to cooperate with or assist authorities of any state in any investigation or proceeding against anyone for obtaining, providing, or assisting someone else to obtain or provide reproductive healthcare that is legal where the health care is provided.
- June 23: Launched a new consumer website to educate Michiganders about the availability of no-cost contraception with most insurance plans.
- June 24: On the day of the *Dobbs* decision, filed a motion urging the Court to immediately consider her lawsuit.
- June 27: Followed up with an additional notice to the Court urging them to immediately consider her lawsuit.
- June 29: Sent a letter to Michigan's insurers urging them to take steps to ensure Michiganders have coverage for reproductive health care to the fullest extent possible under current coverage.
- July 6: Joined with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to launch a public effort to educate Michiganders and health care providers about the difference between emergency contraception and medication abortion. The public effort will disseminate information about the differences between medication abortion and emergency contraception to all local health departments throughout Michigan, healthcare providers throughout the state, and the public.
- July 7: Called on the federal government to clarify and protect Michiganders' right to cross the US-Canada border to seek reproductive health care or prescription medication including medication abortion.
- July 11: Urged President Biden to make birth control available over the counter without a prescription.
- July 13: Signed an executive order refusing to extradite women or health care providers who come to Michigan seeking reproductive freedom.
- July 22: Called on FDA to reduce barriers to medication abortion.

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On the day she testified at her trial in Russia, Brittney Griner may have found herself closer to freedom and a return to the United States.

Several reports said the United States government has offered to swap the so-called "Merchant of Death" Viktor Bout for Griner and another imprisoned American, Paul Whelan.

Bout, who's serving a 25-year federal prison sentence and notorious for his desire to kill Americans, reportedly has been at the top of Russian President Vladimir Putin's wish list.

"We communicated a substantial offer that we believe could be successful based on a history of conversations with the Russians," a senior administration official told CNN. "We communicated that a number of weeks ago, in June."

The unnamed sources told the network that the planned trade received the backing of President Joe Biden after being under discussion since earlier this year.

CNN reported that Biden's support for the swap overrides opposition from the Department of Justice, which is generally against prisoner trades.

The families of Whelan, who Russia has held for alleged espionage since 2018, and WNBA star Griner, jailed in Moscow for drug possession since February, have urged the White House to secure their release, including via a prisoner exchange, if necessary, the report stated.

During her testimony, Griner told the court that she's still unsure how cannabis oil ended up in her luggage.

She said a doctor recommended cannabis oil for her injuries on the basketball court.

## Michigan's working families with kids under 12 now eligible for free or low-cost child care

LANISING, Mich. - Governor Whitmer recently celebrated the bipartisan expansion of access to free or low-cost child care for 150,000 more Michigan kids and their families over the past year. Families with two kids earning up to \$55,500 may qualify for help paying for child care. The state also launched a new tool to help Michiganders easily identify their eligibility for child care benefits.

"Child care is often the biggest expense in a family's budget. That's why I'm proud to cross the aisle to put more money in their pockets by lowering the cost of child care and helping more parents go to work knowing their child is safe, happy, healthy, and learning," said Governor Whitmer. "As parents, we all want what's best for our children. This expansion will help more families pick a child care provider that's right for their child—and their budget. I'm proud of the progress we've made to support young kids and families, and we're not done working to make Michigan a great state to raise a family."

"As a parent, I know that child care is a critical part of each family's budget," said Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. "This historic expansion of childcare to 150,000 more kids and their families will lower costs, help parents get back to work, and ensure kids have the support they need to succeed after a tough few years. Governor Whitmer and I will keep working to support child care professionals and providers, while making affordable, high-quality child care accessible for families in every Michigan community."

"Quality child care is a great investment in children's education," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. "Child care can be an important part of our children's cognitive, physical, and social development,

"I still don't understand to this day how they ended up in my bags," Griner said, adding that she was aware of the Russian law outlawing cannabis oil and that she had not intended to break it.

"I didn't have any intent to use or keep in my possession any substance that is prohibited in Russia," Griner said.

Detained in February, Griner said she had already been in Russia for several months before her arrest.

"My career is my whole life," she reflected as she faces up to 10 years in a Russian prison.

"I dedicated everything. Time, my body, time away from my family. I spent six months out of the year away from everybody, and with a huge time difference."

U.S. officials are awaiting word from the Russian government on whether they will accept the swap.

"It takes two to tango. So, we start all negotiations to bring home Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained with a bad actor on the other side," an unnamed official told CNN.

"We start all of these with somebody who has taken a human being American and treated them as a bargaining chip. So, in some ways, it's not surprising, even if it's disheartening, when those same actors don't necessarily respond directly to our offers, don't engage constructively in negotiations."

The CNN report noted that Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Wednesday that the United States presented a "substantial proposal" to Moscow "weeks ago" for Whelan and Griner, who are classified as wrongfully detained.

The top U.S. diplomat said he intended to discuss the matter on an expected call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

for success in and beyond the classroom. It is also a critical component of economic development, to facilitate parents' employment. I thank Governor Whitmer and the state legislature for their leadership in expanding this opportunity to more Michigan families."

"Michigan needs talent, and talent needs child care. Working parents can't be effective in the workplace if they're concerned about their children. That's why I'm proud of the bipartisan action the Governor and Legislature has taken to make child care more affordable and accessible," Kelli Saunders, Executive Advisor at the Small Business Association of Michigan and member of the Michigan Women's Commission. "We still have mothers that haven't returned to the workforce. Lowering child care costs can be a gamechanger for families."

More families are eligible for help paying for child care than you might think. To help families know if they are likely to qualify, Governor Whitmer partnered with the Michigan Department of Education and Early Childhood Investment Corporation to create an online eligibility calculator. Now families can know right away if they could get help lower child care costs by visiting <https://greatstarttoquality.org/calculator/>.

"We've heard from thousands of families across Michigan that finding an affordable, quality child care program is stressful. Thanks to the bipartisan expansion of child care access, more families are now eligible for free or low-cost child care," said Dawne Bell, Chief Executive Officer of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC). "To help support families with young children, ECIC is proud to have helped create a simple tool that lets families know quickly if they can lower their child care costs."

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