

Ohio abortion rights proponents launch 1st ad of November election

Jessie Balmert
Cincinnati Enquirer

Proponents of Ohio's abortion rights amendment launched their first television ads this week, kicking off what's sure to be an expensive run-up to the Nov. 7 election.

Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights' 30-second ad focuses on the importance of doctors, faith and family in making personal medical decisions instead of government officials. The ad says voting "Yes on Issue 1" would end Ohio's "extreme abortion ban" with no exceptions for rape or incest and protects access to birth control and miscarriage care.

The spot talks about protecting freedom while an American flag waves.

The ad buy is nearly \$687,000 for the week, including \$123,750 on cable and \$563,180 on network television in the Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland markets, according to Medium Buying, a Columbus-based ad buying and tracking company.

The ad buy marks the first of the November campaign. Ohio is the only state with an abortion issue on the ballot this fall.

Abortion opponents spent millions on advertising trying to convince Ohioans to pass an August measure that would have made it harder to amend the state constitution. That effort failed, 57% to 43%.

The Ohio Roundtable, affiliated with the conservative American Policy Roundtable, recently distributed mailers marking up the proposed constitutional amendment with phrases like "Are there no human rights for the unborn?"

What is Issue 1 on the November ballot?

The proposed amendment, which is Issue 1 on the November ballot, would enshrine access to abortion, contraception and other reproductive decisions in the state constitution.

Abortions would be permitted up until viability, which is when a fetus can survive outside the uterus with reasonable measures. Abortions could be performed after that point if a doctor determines it's necessary to save a pregnant patient's life or health.

Proponents of the measure say it's needed to prevent Republican lawmakers from restricting access to the procedure. GOP lawmakers passed a ban on most abortions in 2019 that took effect for several months after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

“As a doctor, I know that decisions around pregnancy, including abortion, birth control and miscarriage care, are personal and private and should be made by women and their families with support from their faith and physician,” said Dr. Marcela Azevedo, spokesperson for Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights said in a statement. “But here in Ohio, the government is making those decisions for us.”

Opponents say the amendment's language is too broad and could be interpreted to eliminate parental consent before minors' abortions among other scenarios. Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican and longtime abortion opponent, has called the measure "extreme" and promised to oppose it.