

# OPINION

## IOWA EDITORIAL

### Abortion rights live another day. Will you fight to keep them?

DES MOINES REGISTER, JUNE 17

In a peculiar and narrow manner, courts have once again stymied Republicans' efforts to ignore public opinion and take away the right of Iowa girls and women to choose abortion.

Three Iowa Supreme Court justices on Friday rejected a brutally invasive law that was passed in 2018 but never took effect. The ban on most abortions at about six weeks of pregnancy would have, in practical terms, kept many women from choosing abortion because it would be too late to legally get one by the time they realized they were pregnant. Three justices would have lifted a 2019 injunction blocking the so-called fetal heartbeat ban. With one justice recused, the tie vote means that a lower court's decision leaving the injunction in place is the final word on the topic.

For people who are committed to abortion rights in the interest of preserving women's health and dignity, the feeling perhaps resembles watching the underdog sports team you support secure a lucky victory early in the playoffs: The win is what matters, more than how it happened, but now a bigger challenge awaits.

That challenge, of course, is the expectation that sometime in the next eight months or so, the Republican-controlled Legislature will try again. Republicans have expanded their House and Senate majorities since 2018. But it would be a mistake to think that success is inevitable for Gov. Kim Reynolds and legislative leaders.

#### IOWA REPUBLICANS ARE NOT MONOLITHIC, AND ABORTION IS A PARTICULARLY DIVISIVE ISSUE

Nobody knows exactly how aggressive an abortion bill will eventually emerge at the Statehouse. The composition of the Statehouse means it takes either 10 Republican representatives or nine Republican senators bucking their party, assuming Democrats are united, to prevent passage of a bill.

Justice Thomas Waterman, writing for the justices who supported continuing to block the six-week abortion ban, noted that legislators took no action on abortion in 2023 despite knowing they'd already lost the first round of the attempt to enact the six-week ban through the courts.

Some current legislators signed their names this year to a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the six-week ban. While it was surprising to see Waterman consider the 45 signatures from members of the House as evidence that today's Legislature might not support the six-week ban, it's certainly true that the 15 other House Republicans would be the most likely persuadable. Several people on that list opposed one of more of the Legislature's cruel and misguided laws this spring.

Iowans will have a chance to make a difference through lobbying these legislators when Republican leaders make their next move.

#### ABORTION RIGHTS ADVOCATES SHOULD SPEAK UP, AND IOWA LAWMAKERS SHOULD LISTEN

The foundational stakes involved for individual liberty are impossible to overstate. But high-flying principle won't win the day here. It will take a bare-knuckled show of political muscle.

It may seem banal to encourage Iowans to contact their legislators to make their views on abortion known. But Republican legislators will be under tremendous pressure in their caucus to fall in line to support long-promised tougher abortion restrictions. Legislators need to know if their constituents don't agree with the party bosses and that they'll pay a price at the ballot box to ignore voters' will.

The newest court outcome gives Iowans the opportunity to lobby their legislators for a result they favor. The business community could provide a particularly welcome contribution after mostly sitting out this year's debates on anti-LGBTQ legislation and then complaining about those laws, as reported by the Cedar Rapids Gazette.

For their part, lawmakers should listen — to individual constituents, to measurements of what Iowans as a whole want from their government, and to the tragic experiences of girls and women both before and after Roe v. Wade looked out for their safety and dignity.

## ARGUS ON CURRENT EVENTS



ARGUS HAMILTON

The White House issued a proclamation on Sunday honoring Father's Day, which praised dads and step-dads and grand dads and all the work they do and all they love they have for their families. There's more. I'm not sure who needs to hear this but Walmart sells cards in packs of five.

Paul McCartney announced he's going to employ artificial intelligence to produce an exact copy of John Lennon's voice

to use as vocals when he records one final Beatles song.

I think we need to hear more from the departed. Ghost II. Swazye died 14 years ago and he still hasn't made Ghost II.

The U.S. Open was played at the Los Angeles Country Club in Beverly Hills. One of the greens adjoins the back yard of the old Playboy Mansion. In those days, if you used too much club and overshot the green, your balls could wind up in the hot tub and your photo in the National Enquirer.

Arnold Schwarzenegger in his Netflix series raves about his son Joseph Baena whom he had by his housemaid years back amid a domestic scandal resulting in his divorce, but the boy turned out great. The kid is half Mexican and half German. There's not a border in the world that can stop this kid.

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## ONE MAN'S PERSPECTIVE

### One unpleasant 24-hour window



RANDY M. CAUTHRON  
SPENCER REPORTER  
MANAGING EDITOR

Question for you?  
When do you pay \$250-plus for a one-night stay at a economy, low budget hotel?

Answer ...  
When you choose to book a room near the Omaha airport during the opening weekend of the College World Series.

Chalk it up to bad timing.  
My mother has been visiting since early-May when she flew out from her home in a Philadelphia suburb where she lives with my sister. Because of upcoming medical appointments she needed to return home on Sunday. A few weeks ago when we began the process of searching for a Saturday night room ahead of her 6:40 a.m. Sunday flight I knew something was up. First of all there was very limited hotel availability within a 45 minute radius of the airport, and those that had rooms were price gouging the heck out of everyone. The normally low \$100 room rate at the normally affordable hotel had ballooned to about \$250.

So we bit the bullet and booked the room needing to be at the very nearby airport around 5:30 a.m.  
All I can say is wow.  
First of all when we got there, the one lone luggage wobbly cart was a utility cart covered by left over carpeting which coincidentally happened to match the pattern on the floor. We also discovered the pool wasn't open. Disappointing but not that big a deal. Nice clean lobby, with a breakfast area and couch and chair seating. After checking in, we got to our room just down the hall. Upon opening the door we were greeted by a smell which can only be described as a sent blending mildew and weed. You would think for \$250 you'd at least get a microwave and mini-fridge. No such luck.

As we sat on the bed, enjoying the aroma, we knew we didn't want to spend anymore time than we had to in the room.  
A quick trip to Council Bluffs and a great meal at Texas Roadhouse left us with a couple more hours to kill before we were forced to return to the room and try to sleep. My wife, mother and myself made a stop at the nearby Bass Pro Shop where I sat in a rocking chair outside by the bubbling water fountain — I love nature — while my wife and mom walked off dinner in the store (I didn't need to walk off my dinner because I can't eat much anymore). After their tour of the store, we regrettably

returned to the packed hotel to contemplate the prospects of a "good night's sleep."

My wife decided she wanted to go outside the hotel to a small nearby park walking path and take a couple of laps to continue her efforts to burn off her prime rib calories. Her first lap made her available of some homeless individuals hanging out in the park. She returned to the room after just one lap.

Leah explained, "The first time around I was a curiosity. A second lap I would have become a mark."  
So we settled in to try to capture a decent night's sleep with an alarm going off at 4:45 a.m.

It was a rough night with people moving up and down the halls, talking and mingling outside the very thin walls, and slamming doors. For these reasons, and a couple of others, it was a rough night of sleep.

When 4:45 arrives and the alarm goes off, we got up and got around to take my mom to a very busy and redesigned Eppley Airfield with plans to return to the hotel and try to squeeze out a couple more hours of sleep.

After returning, we walk in to find the front desk unmanned and someone without luggage sleeping on one of the couches in the welcome area. I decided to grab a bite at the very limited kitchen area where I sat for about 45 minutes watching people come in and out of the hotel as they prepared to head to Day 2 of the college World Series. Still nobody appeared behind the counter at anytime and all just moved around the sleeping individual with quiet curiosity as though it wasn't unusual. Eventually some guy in a tank top walked in and sat down behind the counter, looking like he had just come off a three day bender, and appeared to be manning the front desk. He didn't speak to any of the hotel guests moving about nor did he blink at the person snoozing in a huddled ball in the midst of every-one moving about.

After returning to the room and squeezing out a much needed couple hours of sleep, we headed out. The guy on the couch was gone. Someone else — with sleeves and shorts — was behind the front desk and we were on our way home.

The experience convinced me, enough can't be said about the comfort and amenities of a good Hampton Inn. Safety and cleanliness is worth a few extra bucks.

Be well. Stay healthy. God bless.  
And as always, what say you?

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## GUEST COMMENTARY

### Mental health care remains a priority of Legislature



JOHN WILLS  
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The Iowa Legislature continues to prioritize expanding access to mental health care in every corner of the state by passing bills to recruit and retain mental health providers to Iowa. Below is a list of bills passed this session that help access to mental health care and have been signed by the governor:

**Mental Health Rate Increase** — The HHS budget (SF561) provides \$13 million in increased state funding towards mental health and substance abuse Medicaid rates. In total with federal funding, this is over \$35 million increase to ensure that the state can recruit and retain mental health providers to care for Iowans in need. These increases came based on a Medicaid rate review that compared Iowa's mental health rates to surrounding states and to Medicare.

• **Medical Malpractice** — House File 161 limits the total amount of noneconomic damages for a medical malpractice claim at \$2 million for causes of action involving a hospital, and at \$1 million for all other causes of action.

• **Rural Emergency Hospitals** — Senate File 75 establishes licensure in Iowa for Rural Emergency Hospitals. Federal law created this designation in 2020, and has allowed this new hospital designation to begin Jan. 1, 2023. This bill also requires ambulatory surgical centers to be licensed in Iowa.

• **Mental Health Non-Competes** — House File 93 prohibits

noncompete agreements with mental health providers, allowing the provider to stay with their patient.

• **Psychologist Prescribing** — House File 183 removes the requirement that a psychologist complete certain requirements within five years of being issued a conditional prescription certificate. This bill also changes that the physician supervising does not need to be board-certified in specific specialties.

• **Psychiatrist Public Fellowship** — House File 274 revises the state-funded psychiatry residency program that was established last session, to include two fellowship positions. The program will annually graduate nine psychiatry residents and two psychiatry fellows.

• **Physician Assistants** — House File 424 repeals requirements that physician assistants practice under the supervision of a physician, and instead requires collaboration, including psychiatric PAs.

• **Commitment Hearings** — House File 466 allows health care providers who have examined a patient involved in a substance abuse or mental health commitment to testify by video. Current law only allows for telephone testimony.

• **Mental Health and Disability Services** — House File 471 comes from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to specialize the Independence Mental Health Institute to behaviorally complex youth and the Cherokee MHI to acute and forensic adults, makes changes to the Regional MHDS Governing Board makeup, and adds competency-based restoration to the core service domains of the MHDS Regions.

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