

NEWS:

Abortion Bill Likely to See House Action in June

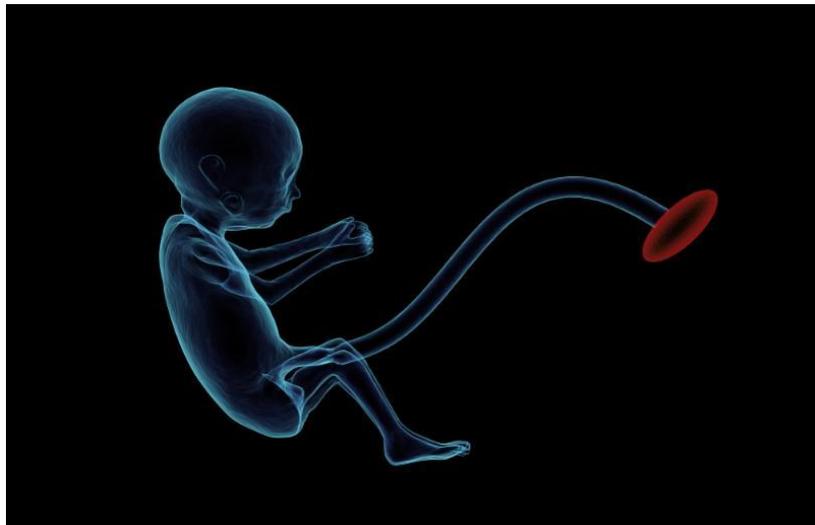
MAY 19, 2017 – A dramatic vote is likely to take place in the House of Representatives after lawmakers return to the capitol in June following their current two-week break.

Earlier this week, the House Health & Human Development Committee released a bill seeking to maintain the current status quo for women seeking an abortion in Delaware.

Eight of the committee's 14 members voted to release the measure to the Ready List, where it will be eligible to be brought to the House floor for debate and a vote.

[Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 5](#) has already cleared the Senate, winning approval with the minimum 11 votes needed for passage.

Delaware law largely prohibits abortion unless the life of the mother is at risk; the baby is liable to be born with severe, permanent disabilities; or the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest.



The U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*, as well as other rulings, established a woman's constitutional right to have an abortion prior to the viability of the embryo. The High Court's ruling invalidated the Delaware law, which remains part of the Code.

Viability -- the capacity of the embryo to survive outside the womb, with or without the aid of medical technology -- is generally considered to occur after 23 weeks of pregnancy.

The definition of "viability" contained in the bill provides no firm threshold, but rather leaves that determination to the "good faith medical judgment" of the doctor performing the procedure.

Concerned a more conservative Supreme Court could make future rulings that would again allow Delaware's abortion law to be applied, the bill's advocates are seeking to change it. They maintain enactment of their bill would guarantee access to abortion under the same legal framework that has been in place for more than four decades.

The General Assembly returns to action June 6th.