

## **Gaggle - 1 Year Since Dobbs.mp3**

**Ron Hansen** It's been a year since the U.S. Supreme Court erased federal abortion rights in a ruling that divided Americans and injected the issue into the 2022 midterm elections.

**Montage of reactions to Dobbs** You remember the day Kennedy was shot. We're going to remember the day Roe versus Wade was released. / It will put the health of women at risk in a way we have not seen in my lifetime. / This affects women who are suffering an unwanted pregnancy and who must be afraid and who must feel alone. But today we want to tell them they are not alone. / I cannot imagine living in a state. Where my body is now, once again controlled by my government.

**Ron Hansen** Those are just a few voices of Arizonans reacting then to the decision known as Dobbs.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** The ruling upended abortion laws across the country and created confusion in Arizona over whether a 19th century near-total ban on abortions was the law or a 2021 law that limited most abortions to within 15 weeks of conception. Arizona's legal landscape on this issue remains less than clear, and many candidates appear eager to test the political potency of abortion as an issue in 2024.

**Ron Hansen** Welcome to The Gaggle in Arizona politics podcast by The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com. Each week we put the magnifying glass on the biggest political issues that affect you. I'm Ron Hansen. I cover national politics for the Republic.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** And I'm Mary Jo Pitzl. I cover state and legislative issues. Today we're speaking with two guests about how Dobbs has affected Arizonans and what that could mean for people running in 2024. First, you'll hear from Stephanie Innes, who covers healthcare issues for The Arizona Republic. Then you'll hear from Amy Walter of the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, which tracks political races across the country.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** Stephanie. Welcome back to The Gaggle.

**Stephanie Innes** Thanks for having me.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** When Davos came down, Arizona had conflicting laws regarding abortion from a 19th century criminal ban on virtually all abortions to a very recent 15 week ban. When did that get sorted out? And what is the law in Arizona after Dobbs and a pile of bills at the legislature?

**Stephanie Innes** Yeah, So it was a very confusing time when Dobbs came down last June 24th, because of this 19th-century law that criminalizes abortion in virtually all cases, except for when the life of the mother is threatened. And it also would impose prison sentences on abortion providers. So what happened when Dobbs came down is that we have nine abortion clinics in the state, and at least eight of them immediately stopped providing abortion care. The issue ended up in the courts and ultimately, after a lot of ping ponging and a lot of, you know, the clinics saying we are offering abortions, we aren't offering because of what was going on in the courts. Ultimately, what happened is the Arizona Court of Appeals in December said that the 15 week abortion ban, which actually took effect at the end of September, it was in effect. And that law is 15 week ban with no exceptions for rape or incest, and that could actually coexist with this 19th century ban on abortion that is still on the books, which some people feel is problematic, but that they

could actually coexist. And that in a sense, in essence, what that means is that the 15 week ban is in effect.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** But if it allows the criminal provisions to still stand, is that the case? Can providers be criminally prosecuted?

**Stephanie Innes** So the court of appeals said no, but some antiabortion groups or an individual actually has appealed that to the Arizona Supreme Court. So the issue is not final, which I think some people you know, there was a lot of celebrating in December saying, okay, well, these laws can be harmonized and the 15 week ban is in effect. So we still do have access to abortions in Arizona. So for reproductive rights people, that was a good thing. The issue is that that wasn't necessarily final because it has been appealed to the Arizona Supreme Court. And I just talked to Cathy Herrod with the Center for Arizona Policy, which is a conservative leaning group. And she says they're really waiting for this Arizona Supreme Court to rule, and they're very.

**Ron Hansen** Hopeful to be clear on this. Has Attorney General Chris Mayes or any of the county attorneys across the state said they will not take action in abortion related matters just as a matter of principle or the opposite promise that they absolutely will as soon as they have the opportunity?

**Stephanie Innes** Well, Kris Mayes, when she ran for attorney general, said specifically that her office would not prosecute women or doctors in the state of Arizona for seeking abortion or for providing abortions. And right now, based on the ruling from the Court of Appeals in December, doctors cannot be prosecuted for performing abortion care as long as within 15 weeks. The issue is that that could change depending on whether the Arizona Supreme Court rules otherwise.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** So have there been any prosecutions or any civil actions against providers citing either of these laws, the 15 week ban or the 19th century law?

**Stephanie Innes** Not that I'm aware of now.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** So it's all in the courts?

**Stephanie Innes** It's all in the courts. I mean, it's and a lot of it is just a chill factor where providers are really worried about being prosecuted right now. There is I mean, and I think it's important for patients to know that there is legal access to abortion in Arizona up to 15 weeks, no exceptions for rape or incest. There is an exception to save the life of the mother. So I think it's important that people know that because there's a lot of confusion among patients. And in fact, Planned Parenthood, Arizona even has hired navigators at their clinics to help people understand what the law is, what they can and can't do, and where they can get services if perhaps it's it's pushing after the 15 weeks because some of these people, they actually, you know, pregnant individuals, they're not necessarily people who want to terminate their pregnancies, but sometimes there are fetal abnormalities that they don't discover until later in the pregnancy. So then they need to go to other states.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** I should note that also this past legislative session, there were, you know, a couple of bills dealing with abortion, as there always is. But they had a very different outcome. They came from Republican sponsors. They were passed with Republican almost entirely Republican support, but were quickly vetoed by Governor Katie Hobbs. So

legislatively, there has been no change. It looks like everything's going to hinge on what happens with these court cases.

**Stephanie Innes** Yeah, and I think reproductive rights groups were very pleased that Governor Hobbs, who's a Democrat, was elected, along with Attorney General Chris Mayes, because they've both been staunch defenders of access to abortion. The problem is that the legislature is still a majority Republican that is trying to block access to abortion. So therefore, repealing the 19th century ban, for instance, isn't going to happen unless you flip the legislature because the bill isn't going to get through for Governor Hobbs to sign. So they said while it's been helpful for her to be in there. Her function right now is vetoing things that come to her desk, but she's not able to sign laws unless they get through the legislature that would improve access to abortion.

**Ron Hansen** Let's change gears on this a bit. What do we know about the number of abortions in Arizona since the Dobbs ruling? Do we have a firm sense of the number of cases? Do we have a sense as to how matters involving unwanted pregnancies have been resolved in the state, perhaps going out of state? Anything at all that sort of tells us much about that?

**Stephanie Innes** The only information I have on that right now is anecdotal. The state every year puts out a report on abortion care, but the 2022 data is not available yet. So all I can tell you is what the providers are telling me. And what I know is that there was a lot of confusion among patients because the abortion clinics, you know, there are nine of them, and initially most of them stopped providing care altogether when Dobbs was decided. And then some of them were only providing medication abortions for a while, and then some of them stopped again and then they restarted. So the result is that patients were unclear as to whether abortion was even legal in Arizona. So some of them either went out of state or, you know, I'm already starting to hear cases where pregnant people did carry pregnancies to term that they didn't want because they were not able to get the abortion care that they wanted. So my guess is that abortion numbers probably went down, but I don't have that. You know, I don't have a lock on that number. There is a publication called FiveThirtyEight that says that abortion numbers have gone down since the Dobbs decision and their numbers that they were using for July 20, 22 through March 2023 is that the numbers have gone down by 6000. I don't know whether or not that is accurate, but that is what this publication is reporting. But I mean, I think it makes sense that abortion numbers would go down, because the very fact also that we previously had allowed abortions up until viability, which is typically 23 to 24 weeks. And in late September, that changed to the 15 weeks. So that by the very virtue of that law, we're going to have fewer abortions. And then combine that with all ping pong in the courts and the public confusion and the chill effect and the fact that some clinics have had to reduce their hours because of staff moving to other states or staff fearing to work in these clinics or else wanting a more steady job because the clinics have been opening and closing. You know, I know at least one clinic went down to two days a week and is still at that level. So yeah, there are fewer appointments available.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** Stephanie, While you're waiting, like for official data to come out from the state, what have you been hearing from women who you know have had unwanted or ectopic pregnancy? What kind of stories are coming in from people that are looking for abortions in Arizona?

**Stephanie Innes** Well, the the stories that I'm getting are really through the clinics or through Eloisa Lopez, who's head of the abortion fund of Arizona. So her organization

helps people finance travel and other arrangements if they need abortion care and also to pay for the actual abortions. So what we're hearing is there are at least two cases. That she knows of where women have had to carry pregnancies to term that they didn't want. And in one case it was because the baby had serious medical issues and now the baby was born. And this mom is facing a lifetime of huge medical expenses for a baby that has serious medical problems. There are anecdotal reports of people having to carry babies to term that, you know, that they're not going to survive for long once they're born. So having to carry that baby to term and then, you know, living for a few hours or a few days with a baby that they know is going to die.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** Is there any kind of support that's being offered for women who reluctantly carry the baby to term?

**Stephanie Innes** Well, the abortion clinics are trying to not have that happen. But Planned Parenthood has a program that they've just started called Abortion Do laws where they'll assist you through the whole process and actually hold your hand and be there with you? I don't know about support for people who had to carry their babies to term when they didn't want them. I know the fact that there is a group that's hearing about these stories. I would assume that they are providing some support, but I don't know that for sure. But I will add that, you know, I spent the day in an abortion clinic in February, and some of the people are very panicked when they call because we have a 24 hour waiting period in Arizona. So, first of all, it's hard to get an appointment. And then when you do get an appointment, you have to have a consultation and then wait 24 hours before you can get either a surgical or medication abortion. And sometimes the 24 hours is not 24 hours is longer because of high demand. We have people coming from Texas. There are at least a dozen states where abortion is completely not legal. So we have people from other states coming here as well. And, you know, as I said before, just the panic. So when I was at this abortion clinic, there were people from Texas in the clinic and there were people calling, and they only take a certain amount of calls and then they have to cut the calls off because their appointments get full. At least two clinics I know of do that process where they open the phone lines every day there, all their appointments get booked and then they shut down the phone lines.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** For those who oppose abortion rights. Are they doing anything to help women through unwanted pregnancies and into early motherhood?

**Stephanie Innes** Not that I'm aware of. They do have a lot of centers in Arizona. There are 47 of them that I'm aware of compared with nine abortion care clinics. And they do provide counseling and support to pregnant people. But I am not aware of programs they have or after somebody gives birth. That doesn't mean they don't exist, but I am not aware of them.

**Ron Hansen** One more question, Stephanie. How has all of this played out in the medical community for those who provide health care and specifically in the realm of abortion care as well, from the legal jumble that has been playing out in the courts for months to just the need and contact with people who are trying to get some clarity as to what their options even are now. What has this been like for doctors and other caregivers?

**Stephanie Innes** You know, it's been, I think, a scary time for providers. And even when I go around to clinics or interview some of the clinic directors, they even have different rules as to this 15 weeks, Like there's one clinic that does 14, 14 weeks and six days, or some do 15 weeks and six days because they think that's within the law. So there are actually

different cutoff times. And some of the people who are more conservative who say do 14 weeks is because they're afraid of being prosecuted. And when I talk to clinic directors, they say that the hospitals are sometimes sending people to the clinics because they don't know always when is this to save the life of a mother? So that's an issue. You know, how long do you wait before you're going to save the life of a mother? And I know at least one clinic director told me that she had somebody sent to her from a hospital who really was very sick and her baby wasn't going to survive, but the hospital wouldn't do the abortions. So this clinic in Phenix did a.

**Ron Hansen** Have we seen any change in the availability of OB-GYN or other family physician services in Arizona that traces back to the state's position on abortion rights at this point?

**Stephanie Innes** Absolutely. The clinics part of the reason that they were opening and closing so often in the last year was because of the courts. But another factor is staffing. And Planned Parenthood has particularly struggled with this. I think they're in a better place now in terms of getting staff. But they definitely told me and I spoke with their president and CEO who told me that they had a problem with providers leaving Arizona because they wanted to work in a climate that was more supportive of abortion care. And I know that certainly that's a fear moving forward with, say, medical students, medical residents working here, that they're going to leave the state as well, because who wants to work in a state where the service you're providing might end any time? And I think that's a real struggle for some providers.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** In the immediate aftermath of Dobbs. There was an attempt to codify reproductive rights in the law, but the supporters didn't get enough signatures in time to qualify for the ballot in 2022. What's on tap for 2024?

**Stephanie Innes** So there are plans to put this on the ballot in 2024. I inquired about the specific language and they do not know what that language is going to be. I thought maybe they would want to repeal the 19th century law. Maybe they would want to put something saying reproductive rights are protected. I didn't know what the language would be. And when I spoke with Eloisa Lopez of the Abortion Fund of Arizona, she said that there is definitely going to be an effort to put something on the ballot, but that the language is just up in the air. But there is very much a feeling amongst reproductive rights advocates that the general public will be supportive of a measure. They just need to be careful with the wording, because while most Arizonans support access to abortion, not everybody supports complete access to abortion. So a lot of people want some kind of restrictions. So they just have to work on the wording to make sure it's something that is going to be supported by voters.

**Ron Hansen** Stephanie, thank you for taking the time to go through all this with us. If people want to follow your work on social media, where can they find you?

**Stephanie Innes** They can find me on Twitter @StephanieInnes.

**Ron Hansen** Now we're expanding out to see how a year after Dobbs is affecting politicians across the country. For that, I sat down with Amy Walter on Zoom. She's the publisher and editor in chief at the Cook Political Report and also hosts a podcast called The Odd Years. Amy, thanks for coming on the gaggle.

**Amy Walter** I'm very happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

**Ron Hansen** So there was a lot of speculation about how Dobbs would play in the 2022 elections. Republicans did win the House, as had been long expected, but they lost a lot of Senate and gubernatorial races, as we certainly saw here in Arizona. So is there a consensus as to how significant that issue was in shaping the actual results in the last cycle?

**Amy Walter** It is one of those rare consensus issues where Republicans and Democrats both come to the same conclusion that the issue itself helped to motivate Democratic voters, many of whom were pretty disappointed, either with the president's handling of issues or disappointed with the state of the economy. They turned out, nonetheless, because they saw this issue, the issue of abortion access as critical in states like Michigan, where there was actually a ballot initiative on the ballot. We saw that it not only helped at the gubernatorial level, the ballot measure passed, but that turnout surged at all levels. It helped Democrats win back or win over control of the state legislature. It helped those Democratic incumbents in marginal districts or swing districts win by pretty healthy margins. And then if you look, as you pointed out, run in a place like Arizona, where especially at the Senate race level, you had a candidate who was effectively portrayed by Democrats and their allies as way, way out of step with the mainstream on the issue of abortion. I think all of those things together helped Democrats in 2020 to stave off what was looking like a pretty miserable election.

**Ron Hansen** Amy, In 2022, we had a county prosecutor's race here in Maricopa County that sort of went against the grain in some ways. We saw a Democrat who was very vocal in her concerns about abortion rights After Dobbs and a Republican, Rachel Mitchell, was able to overcome that in a county that basically voted for Democrats in most of the countywide races that we saw of that cycle and statewide races. What, if anything, does that tell us about how candidates can perform in this post? DOBBS Environment? What did we see nationally or in special races that may have helped change the dynamics in some ways?

**Amy Walter** It's a great question. And I've talked to a number of strategists about their experience in 2022, both Republican and Democrat. And look, the tone of the way in which a candidate talks about abortion matters. Both sides agree to that. So you can't say I support restrictions on abortion or I consider myself to be pro-life. But the way in which it comes across matters is, well, does it look like you are taking things away from women, that it seems mean spirited or it seems like this is something that you are doing that is in an attacking sort of way. So that I think the tone mattered. And Democrats will admit to that. Just the abortion issue itself is not enough to win elections. You have to do other things On top of it is a it was a driving issue. It was a motivating issue, especially for base Democratic voters. But if, for example, you're running for a state level seat or whatever it was, city council or Congress, and you're not addressing the other really important things that voters care about, then it's not likely that just saying abortion are Dobbs over and over and over again is going to. And in fact, Democrats will tell you. Yes. We talked a lot about abortion in 2022. We talked a lot about the economy, too. We talked a lot about the ways in which our candidates were trying to help regular people with the stress of inflation, the bills that they were moving in Congress, the ways in which they were working to help bring the economy back to a stable place. So they would argue that you've got to be able to do both. And voters, you know, they're not all of us. We're all voters. We are not looking through a lens of just one issue. Most of us aren't. And we can believe multiple things at one time. Abortion is a really important issue for me or is not an important issue for me.

Here are the other things that are also important. And here's how this candidate is or is not addressing through the panoply of these issues.

**Ron Hansen** We've talked a lot about 2022. The natural follow up is any sense of how this might play out in 2024.

**Amy Walter** Right. And nobody knows the answer to that question. What you are seeing is that at the state legislative level, especially the Republicans, specifically in some of these red states, did not see that the 2022 election was a referendum on abortion, or if it were, it didn't change the way that they were going to legislate on the issue. They didn't look at the election in a place like Florida. In Florida, you didn't see legislators or the governor, Of course, Ron DeSantis, say, boy, 2020 to that abortion issue. That was this. That was a tricky one for our side. Maybe we should kind of tap the brakes on passing. Abortion legislation that is more restrictive. Maybe we should just sort of leave in place what we have. If we get in a fight about abortion, we're going to lose. Obviously, that's not the case. There's a six week abortion ban now in Florida. In North Carolina, another state that has an overwhelming Republican majority. There's now a 12 week ban in place. Democrats feel, especially in North Carolina, that's an issue that they're going to put front and center, that these Republican legislators who do not feel any pressure politically because they're in safe seats, could go and advocate for a more restrictive ban on abortion. But for statewide candidates or candidates running in Congress for more competitive districts, it's going to be Democrats would argue that's going to be a big problem.

**Ron Hansen** The ruling came down just about a year ago at this time in an election cycle that was already pretty well built out. There was not a lot of time for women in particular to run for office at that point. Obviously, that's not the case this time. Are we seeing more women running for office? Are we seeing a different candidate profile for people who have certain biographies or or backgrounds that suggest this issue is going to be more front and center?

**Amy Walter** Gosh, that's a really good question. I haven't really seen that yet, although if we're looking at let's look at some Senate races right now, for example, there are more Senate races up this year than there are gubernatorial races. But at the Senate level, we know that there are already a number of Democrats who have decided to retire. Dianne Feinstein in California, Ben Cardin in Maryland. And in both of those cases, you have African-American women who are seen as top tier contenders. And probably the candidate with the best opportunity to come to the Senate is Congresswoman Lisa Blunt, Rochester from Delaware. That's place where we have another Democratic retirement. These are very dark blue states where the primary is the whole game, but they're also states that could elect. A black woman. And right now, as you probably know, there are zero of them in the United States Senate. The potential for having three of them is there. As I said, it's more likely that it's probably 1 to 2. But either way, that's double the number that are there at this moment. They aren't necessarily running on the issue of abortion. And again, the race is really the Democratic primary. So it's not going to be as as high profile. But I think the fact that you're going to have black women who are. Going to have an appeal in an electorate that feels like, okay, we are making a statement about the importance of having women at the table and obviously having women at the table when a conversation about abortion access becomes really, really important. The other thing I am trying to remember where I saw this, I think it was a. The Democratic group Catalist. This is a group that puts together voter file information and shares it with Democratic campaigns. So they do a lot of this work for their clients, but they will also release information to the media. And they came out the other week with their assessment of what happened in the 2022 campaign

using voter file information. Right. Who voted and their own modeling that they were doing during the campaign. And one thing that they came to discover by doing all of this work is when you look at Democratic candidates and how well they performed with certain demographic groups. Democrats did much worse with white college men this year than they did in 2020. But they did much better or better. I don't know how much better, but better with women who are Latino and with women who are white, who do not have a college degree. And I do think that the abortion issue cuts in many ways across it's not just a women piece, but in this case, it does seem as if Democrats success in the midterm election driven a lot by women, not just this stereotype of, you know, suburban, college educated women who turned out to vote, and it was women across the board, across different income status, education status and, of course, race as well. And that for white college educated men who voted for Democrats in the last election, Democrats did not do as well with them this time around. And I sort of posit again, this is just a theory that for many of those men, the issue of the economy was a greater motivator than it was for the women who turned out to vote.

**Ron Hansen** Let me have you hover over the demographic divide here a moment longer. Is this primarily viewed as an issue that is about contraception or about medical procedures? Is this about women's rights? Is there an age component or how does educational attainment or geography factor into how this sort of breaks down in in political races.

**Amy Walter** Right after the election? I got a text message from one of my Democratic sources who said this election wasn't about abortion. It was about Dobbs. So what? What do you mean by that? And this person said, look, the issue isn't about the medical procedure or about how many weeks or all of those different criteria. It was about the fact that women and men felt as if a right that had been enshrined, something that had been around for 50 years that we all had been told is not really going to go anywhere, was suddenly ripped away. And that this idea that. These judges, unelected judges could wake up one day and decide, You know what? Now. ROESGEN What will be next? And you've heard that in a lot of the campaigns, too. And I would I personally would hear this in focus groups. If they're going after Roe v Wade now, what's going to be next? A lot of talk about gay marriage is going to be next. A lot of talk about contraceptions. Maybe they're going to roll back some of those Supreme Court decisions. What's actually these things that we thought were pretty stable in terms of like a consensus? We all sort of agreed that this is the way things are going to be. I would hear in focus groups, too, from people who would say. You know, I consider myself pro-life, but. I never would have said, Yeah, it'd be a good idea to overturn Roe versus Wade. When I said I'm pro-life, that means that was my decision. Do not have an abortion. And this idea that now it's gone for everybody, no matter what. That strikes me. This is what I would hear from these folks. It strikes me as way over the top. So I think this is why you're hearing from many Republicans. The sort of nuance on this is, you know, one. Makes a conversation about the sort of framework, the rules around it rather than about a right being taken away. Right. If if the conversation is about rights and freedoms and values that benefits or Democrats are in this. If it's about, okay, look, we're just saying, here's what the framework is. You have this many weeks or here in the exceptions or etc., etc., that becomes less fraught for Republicans. It was also clear, as you said, you know, when the decision came down, not only had many candidates already announced they were running and filing deadlines were closed. But many Republicans were still fighting in primaries. And so to win these primaries, they had to make sure they were appealing to folks who turn out in primaries who are very conservative. And so they made statements that they might not have made had. The primary already been over. So appealing to those voters by taking positions that were



outside of the mainstream also hurt many of those candidates. And and finally, you know, Republicans nominating candidates who weren't just saying, okay, the Dobbs decision came down, We all need to agree that we need a 15 week or 12 week. And many of them came out said. No exceptions, not for any rape or incest or life of the woman. There were multiple candidates who had either taken positions in the immediate wake of Dobbs or many years before or months before the Dobbs decision that really put them outside of where popular opinion is on this.

**Ron Hansen** Do you have a sense as to how abortion rights stacks up as an issue among all the issues that we foresee for 2024 at this point? Is it about the economy? Is it about, you know, sort of President Biden over everything else or President Trump? How does abortion rights seem to be able to break through and be a factor within any race that is still up for grabs?

**Amy Walter** So what you see from Democrats and you're seeing pretty clearly from the president's campaign is they want to cast this election as of one out. Here's normal, stable, chugging ahead popular views. They are more in line with where America is and where it's going than the Republican Party. The Republican Party is the MAGA party. Right. You hear this from Joe Biden constantly. They are a party that wants to roll back rights. They are the party that is anti-democratic, supporting January six, supporting the roll back up our rights on abortion. So that's the contrast that they that Democrats want to make. On the Republican side, you're right. They just want to make it simply about the economy isn't going well. Joe Biden is not up for the job and we need to get this country back on track. Biden said he was going to do it. He he did sickly mentally just cannot do it. And he certainly can't handle another four years. Vote for the Republican candidate. And what Democrats will tell you is they feel pretty confident, maybe overly confident that this playbook of anti-MAGA, you know, Republicans are the party that is taking us backward has been successful. It worked in 2018, it worked in 2020. It worked in many of these states like Arizona in 2022. The difference, of course, is, you know why we don't we don't know who the nominee on the Republican side will be. Obviously, Donald Trump is the frontrunner right now, but what if he's not the nominee? The second is that Joe Biden isn't a theory anymore. He's the sitting president, a sitting president with a record sitting president with an approval rating that isn't any better than where Donald Trump sits at this moment. And while abortion was a clearly a motivating issue in 2022, is it going to have the same impact now that we will be three years out from the decision and many states will have already passed legislation on this issue and it's no longer that sort of, oh my gosh, and the immediate what's going to happen. So a state like Michigan can say, oh, well, look how successful we were. Democrats would say we were so successful in Michigan, not only did we pass this failed initiative, we now have Democrats up and down the board that can protect any other attempts by Republicans to roll back these protections. So it's it's sort of a different conversation now. However, if you look at, say, a Ron DeSantis say he's the nominee and he signed a six week abortion ban, how effective will Democrats be at being able to frame that as too extreme? And the one place I look for some guidance on that is actually Georgia. You know, Governor Kemp of Georgia is a Republican. He pre. Dobbs but had had signed a six week ban in that state. His Democratic opponent spent a lot and Democrats overall spent a lot of time and energy and money attacking him on that decision. And yet Kemp was successful in winning reelection. And you could look at that and say, oh, well, then, you know, maybe a six week ban is not politically fatal in a swing state. Georgia, obviously a swing state. Or you can say, well, maybe it wasn't successful because Brian Kemp had successfully d magnified himself, we can say by in the primary election that he had to go through. He was challenged by a Trump backed candidate. Donald Trump was really, really, really angry with the Republican governor of Georgia in

2021 and 2022. He thought that the only reason he lost Georgia was because Brian Kemp certified the election he shouldn't have because the election was stolen from him. So he endorsed a candidate to run against Brian Kemp, and Brian Kemp won his primary handily. And so I think it's sent a signal to a lot of voters like, well, I mean, how bad could it be if Donald Trump hates him? He can't really be mad. Right. You know, the enemy of my enemy. And so where abortion was a conversation. And was certainly part of it. That might have been for many of those voters could have said, yeah, I don't really like the six week ban, but, you know, the economy seems to be doing well. He seems to be doing a pretty good job and also like he's not. He's not a Trump person. So that connection between how aligned you are with Trump and how aligned you are on some of these issues like abortion. Will they be able to be separated? Will it all come together? That to me is the big question going forward.

**Ron Hansen** That's a question we'll be watching in the coming year as well. Amy Walter, thanks so much for your time. If people want to follow your work on social media, where can they find you?

**Amy Walter** Well, thank you for asking. There are a couple of ways you can follow what we do here at the Cook Political Report. One, put Politico.com, of course. Click on that. I am on Twitter at Amy Walter. And thank you also for noting We have a podcast that you can find in the app stores of your choosing called The Off Years. The reason we call it the off years is, as you know, it's an odd numbered year, the year 2023. There aren't federal races going on, but that doesn't mean there aren't a lot of topics to chew over. And so that's what we do on our podcast.

**Ron Hansen** Well, thanks so much for your time.

**Amy Walter** You're welcome.

**Ron Hansen** Amy Walter, we'll let you go.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** That wraps up this week's episode on The Gaggle, but you'll want to make sure to tune in next week.

**Forward Promote Clip** You will not forget this vote. Do not take it lightly. And remember, we were here as leaders of this state, as elected leaders representing over 200,000 members in every one of our districts. And with that said, Senate President Pro tem, I vote yes. The House will stand adjourned until 1:15 p.m. Monday, July 31st. To Mr. Cano. Minority Leader Cano, I wish you well in your endeavors. May you do very well at Harvard, and I look forward to seeing you back in the state in the future. We are adjourned.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** We're halfway through the off-year in Arizona politics. We'll talk to our in-house correspondents covering what's happening and what it means as the Arizona legislature heads into summer break for now.

**Ron Hansen** Do you have questions you want us to answer or topics you'd like us to cover? Reach out to us at [thegaggle@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:thegaggle@arizonarepublic.com). That's one word all spelled out. Or call us at 602-444-0804. If you like the show, please leave us a review and share it with a friend to ensure you never miss an episode. Follow The Gaggle on your favorite podcast app. You can follow me on Twitter @RonaldJHansen.

**Mary Jo Pitzl** And I'm on Twitter @MaryJPitzl. Today's episode was edited and produced by Kelly Monahan. You can follow her on Twitter @KaelyMonahan. And thanks for listening to The Gaggle, a podcast from the Arizona Republic and azcentral.com. We'll see you next week.