

STATE LEGAL SNAPSHOT

District of Columbia

Abortion law, status, and enforcement — one-page reference

As of Jul 12, 2026

Research completed Jul 12, 2026

Confidence: high



● Abortion is **protected by statute**, legal at every stage of pregnancy — **no gestational limit**, currently available.

GESTATIONAL LIMIT	None	✓ AVAILABLE	Yes	✓ MOTHER EXEMPT	Yes	FETAL HOMICIDE LAW	No	PERSONHOOD LANGUAGE	No
✓ TELEHEALTH	Allowed	WAITING PERIOD	None	RAPE / INCEST EXCEPTION	N/A	PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	None	✓ SHIELD STATE	Yes
MEDICAID	Hyde only	CIVIL BOUNTY LAW	No	PENDING CHANGE	See below				

§ Jurisdiction overview

Abortion is legal at all stages of pregnancy in the District of Columbia, codified by statute with no gestational limit, though Congress retains the power to override DC law.

D.C. Code § 7-2086.01(b) · D.C. Law 23-90

☒ Fetal personhood & the internal contradiction

D.C. law presents a notable internal tension between civil and criminal/regulatory treatment of the fetus. On the civil side, the D.C. Court of Appeals held in *Greater Southeast Community Hospital v. Williams* (1984) that a viable fetus is a 'person' under the wrongful death and survival statutes — meaning that a tortfeasor who negligently kills a viable fetus in utero is civilly liable as if they had killed a born person. This is a personhood-adjacent holding: the court reasoned that once D.C. recognized a viable fetus's right to be free of tortious injury (following *Bonbrest v.*

A Crisis for Women's Rights: Surveying Feticide Statutes, *Denver University Criminal Law Review* (2016) · D.C. Code § 7-2086.01(b)

MINORS

D.C. law imposes no parental consent or notification requirement for minors seeking abortion; minors of any age may consent to abortion on their own.

SPOUSAL / PATERNAL RIGHTS

D.C. has no statute requiring spousal or paternal consent or notice for abortion; the D.C. Attorney General confirms no permission is needed from 'the other person involved in the pregnancy.'

☒ Penalties in effect

ACTOR	OFFENSE	PENALTY
Pregnant person	No offense; expressly exempt from penalty	None. D.C. Code § 7-2086.01(c)(3)(A) prohibits any penalty.
Physician / health care professional	No criminal abortion offense exists	None for abortion provision. General medical professional discipline available under D.C.
Pharmacist / prescriber	No criminal abortion offense exists	None for dispensing or prescribing abortion medication within scope of practice. General professional discipline may apply for standard-of-care violations.
Helper / assistant / funder	No offense; expressly protected	None. D.C. Code § 7-2086.01(c)(3)(C)-(D) protects those who assist or provide self-managed abortion products.
Clinic protester / obstructor	Willfully or recklessly interfering with access to a medical facility or disrupting its normal functioning (D.C. Code § 22-1314.02)	Misdemeanor: fine up to amount set in D.C. Code § 22-3571.01, imprisonment up to 180 days, or both.

☒ Recent changes

- Dec 2025 Rep. Andrew Clyde (GA-09) introduced the D.C. Shield Law Repeal Act in Congress, seeking to nullify D.C.'s Human Rights Sanctuary Amendment Act of 2022.

- **Feb 2023** D.C. Law 24-254 (Enhancing Reproductive Health Protections Amendment Act of 2022) took effect, expanding protections in D.C.
- **Feb 2023** D.C.
- **May 2020** D.C. Law 23-90 (Strengthening Reproductive Health Protections Amendment Act of 2020) took effect, codifying in D.C.

🗒 Pending changes to watch

Louisiana v. FDA (mifepristone litigation)

Litigation · Fifth Circuit ordered reinstatement of in-person dispensing requirements for mifepristone; Supreme Court stayed that order on May 14, 2026, preserving status quo (telehealth prescribing and mail dispensing) while litigation continues.

If the Fifth Circuit order ultimately takes effect, in-person dispensing would be required for mifepristone nationwide, including in D.C., eliminating mail-order and telehealth prescribing of medication abortion.

Florida and Texas v. FDA (mifepristone approval challenge)

Litigation · Filed December 2025 in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

If successful, could remove mifepristone from the U.S. market entirely, ending medication abortion nationwide — including in D.C.

D.C. Shield Law Repeal Act (federal)

Legislation · Introduced Dec. 3, 2025, by Rep. Andrew Clyde (GA-09); referred to committee. Has not been enacted.

Would nullify D.C. Law 24-257 (Human Rights Sanctuary Amendment Act of 2022), eliminating D.C.'s shield protections and exposing D.C.-based providers, patients, and helpers to out-of-state investigations and subpoenas.

🗒 Key authorities

Government Noninterference in Reproductive Health Decisions D.C. Code § 7-2086.01

The foundational D.C. statute codifying the right to abortion and prohibiting government interference, including protections for self-managed abortion.

Human Rights Sanctuary — Government Nonparticipation D.C. Code § 2-1461.01

Core shield law prohibiting D.C. government cooperation with out-of-state investigations targeting abortion providers, patients, and helpers.

Human Rights Sanctuary — Private Right of Action (Clawback) D.C. Code § 2-1461.02

Allows D.C. defendants to recover damages from out-of-state plaintiffs who obtain judgments against them for abortion care lawful in D.C.

Private Insurance Abortion Coverage Mandate D.C. Code § 31-3834.03a

Requires all individual and group health plans in D.C. to cover abortion without cost-sharing, one of the strongest insurance mandates nationally.

Clinic Access Protection D.C. Code § 22-1314.02

Criminalizes obstruction, trespassing, and interference with medical facilities, protecting abortion clinic access.

Generated from the structured legal focused deep-research record for DC (research completed 2026-07-12). This snapshot condenses a much larger sourced dataset — full citations, quoted statutory text, and plain-language explanations are in the full District of Columbia survey. This document has not been reviewed by a lawyer and should not be used as legal advice.