

CITY WEEKLY

#STOPTHEBANS PROTEST COMES TO UTAH CAPITOL

Pro-choice advocates rally against legislative restrictions.

Posted By [Scott Renshaw](#)

May 21, 2019, 1:52 PM

<https://www.cityweekly.net/BuzzBlog/archives/2019/05/21/stopthebans-protest-comes-to-utah-capitol>



Abortion rights advocates filled the rotunda of the Utah State Capitol on Tuesday afternoon, part of a nationwide series of protests organized in the wake of severe abortion restrictions passed by several state legislatures.

Sondra Stokes, director of community engagement for Planned Parenthood of Utah, led off the #StopTheBans program with a call to pro-choice advocates to make their voices heard. "This time in our nation is about showing up and showing out," Stokes

said, "and that is what you are doing at this moment. ... We will not be dismissed. We are pissed."

"Our organization must match our outrage," Stokes added. "Continue to show up. Your outrage can become a way to organize your thoughts, your action, your voice."

Other speakers included Utah State Rep. Angela Romero and ACLU of Utah Executive Director Brittney Nystrom, in addition to student representatives. "I join many of my female colleagues from Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, Georgia, Kentucky, Arkansas and Iowa, to name a few, to speak out against abortion bans," Rep. Romero said. "These bans are not about

protecting the unborn; these bans are about guiltting women into submission. ... Many of these people are pro-birth, but they're not pro-life."

"We know we have the law on our side. ... We won then, and we're confident that we'll prevail again today." —ACLU of Utah's Brittney Nystrom

Nystrom noted the ACLU's history of successfully challenging legislative attacks on abortion rights—including Utah's own restrictions passed in the 2019 legislative session (**HB 136**). "Twenty-eight years ago, the ACLU filed a lawsuit to stop an unconstitutional abortion ban passed by the Utah state legislature," Nystrom said. "And last month, along with Planned Parenthood, we did it again. We sued because once again our legislative officials have decided



to curb our reproductive rights. When they threaten constitutional rights in Utah, we say, 'We'll see you in court.' We know we have the law on our side. ... We won then, and we're confident that we'll prevail again today."

Rally attendees carried signs expressing their frustration and anger and abortion restrictions; a few dressed as characters from the TV series *The Handmaid's Tale*.