

65 East Wacker Place • Suite 1620
Chicago, Illinois 60601
(312) 368-1066
FAX (312) 368-1090



108 East Cook Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
(217) 528-9200
FAX (217) 528-7214

SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 4085: THE ULTRASOUND OPPORTUNITY ACT

The Ultrasound Opportunity Act simply requires that a woman seeking an abortion, after 7 weeks gestation, be offered *the opportunity* to receive and view an ultrasound of her baby by the physician who is to perform the abortion, the referring physician, or another qualified person working in conjunction with either physician.

This requirement is far from radical, considering:

- Most medical professionals operating in the abortion industry already perform ultrasounds before every abortion – according to a 2002 survey of 113 abortion providers nationwide, 83 percent always performed ultrasounds prior to abortions and another 16 percent performed ultrasound under certain conditions, meaning 99 percent of the facilities had ultrasound available.
- Ultrasounds are used to assist doctors and protect the health and welfare of patients.
- For example, ultrasounds can rule out an ectopic pregnancy, allow the medical professional to examine the child and his or her location and help to more accurately calculate gestational age.
- Twenty-two states, including the Midwestern states of Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Nebraska and Wisconsin, require some type of access to ultrasounds for abortion.

Just as importantly, ultrasounds support the important medical principle of informed choice. Medical evidence indicates that women feel bonded to their children after seeing them on the ultrasound screen. *The Women's Center of Greater Chicagoland*, whose purpose is to reach young women in unplanned pregnancies with a message of hope and help, offer ultrasounds as a source of important information. In the past four years, only ten women have declined the ultrasound, and 71 percent of the thousands of women who chose to view the ultrasound decided not to pursue abortion.

The Ultrasound Opportunity Act allows a woman considering an abortion the option to see her unborn child and the heartbeat. This legislation promotes the woman's physical and psychological health and advances the states' important and legitimate interest in protecting life. This is a concrete, effective step Illinois can take to protect women's health.

In the end, this legislation enacts a small change. Competent medical practice includes the use of ultrasound before an abortion. This legislation adds on one simple question: *Would you like to see the ultrasound image?*

The decision to abort "is an important, and often a stressful one, and it is desirable and imperative that it be made with full knowledge of its nature and consequences."
Planned Parenthood v. Danforth, 428 U.S.