



NEWS RELEASE

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Ultrasound Options Bill Killed in Committee

Abortion-Minded Women to be Kept in the Dark in Maryland

ANNAPOLIS –A bill protecting the right of women to give informed consent before an abortion procedure was struck down by the Senate Finance Committee Friday by a vote of 9 to 2.

The bill, *Ultrasound Options*, sponsored by Sen. Bryan Simonaire (R-31), would have required abortion practitioners in Maryland—when an ultrasound examination is conducted prior to an abortion—to provide the woman with the opportunity to view the active ultrasound image and to receive a physical copy of the ultrasound picture.

Contrary to some reports, the *Ultrasound Options* bill did not mandate that a sonogram be performed before all abortions, nor did it obligate the woman to view the sonogram. It simply would have made the sonogram image available to women who would choose to view it.

“This action by the Senate Finance Committee sends a clear message that Maryland stands squarely with the abortion lobby,” said Angela Martin, executive director of Maryland Right to Life. **“Rather than ensuring that women have the opportunity to consider all the relevant information before an abortion, the committee voted to keep women in the dark.”**

According to the National Abortion Federation’s 2008 Clinical Policy Guidelines, abortion practitioners must obtain informed consent and assess that the decision to have an abortion is made freely by the patient.” However, representatives of NARAL Pro-choice Maryland, Planned Parenthood, and several abortion facilities opposed the bill.

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Martin's testimony pointed out that the bill is needed to ensure that women are not choosing without sufficient reflection. **“Many post-abortive women report feeling rushed or pressured into choosing abortion,”** she maintained. **“This bill would have provided woman with an opportunity to understand what they were undertaking.”**

Introducing the bill, Sen. Simonaire made it clear that no woman would be forced to view a sonogram against her will. Pointing out that some women come to feel profound regret after an abortion, he maintained that the state needs to ensure that all women have the opportunity to be fully informed about their decision.

“Some post-abortive women later see a sonogram and are devastated by their decision. Some might have chosen differently if they had been given the chance to view the sonogram. This bill provides them with that option,” he explained.

Sixteen states have enacted sonogram laws that enhance the opportunity for women seeking an abortion to see an ultrasound image of the embryo or fetus they are carrying. The Maryland bill was modeled after a bill that passed in Ohio last year and was signed into law by a pro-abortion governor.

“Abortion is irreversible,” Martin concluded. “Women have a right to know what they are choosing. By killing this bill in committee, the senators have denied Maryland women the right to be fully informed.

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Maryland Right to Life is the Maryland affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee, the nation's largest pro-life organization with affiliates in all 50 states and more than 3,000 chapters nationwide. Maryland Right to Life abhors and denounces violence in all forms. It works through legislative action and education to protect those lives threatened by abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and human embryonic research.