

OPPOSE HB 2808: Biased Counseling and Ultrasound Requirement Chief Patron Del. Byron (R-22)

House Bill 2808, introduced by Del. Kathy Byron (R-22), imposes additional requirements on mandated, state-scripted counseling already in place in Virginia. This bill requires physicians and/or providers to:

- Offer the woman an opportunity to view an ultrasound image of her “unborn child”
- Obtain a signature from the woman to indicate that she viewed an ultrasound image of her “unborn child” or that she was given the opportunity to view an ultrasound image of her “unborn child” and refused
- Maintain ultrasound equipment, perform an ultrasound scan of the pregnant female’s “unborn child,” and require signature by the pregnant female.

Why Oppose HB 2808?

The legislation is not about women’s health and healthcare. It is a thinly veiled attempt to shame women about their decisions or to intimidate them into changing their decisions. If legislators truly cared about women’s health, they would support prevention measures, like full access to birth control, including Emergency Contraception, access to family planning, and quality sexuality education.

- Mandating that a woman view an ultrasound is not about healthcare, as illustrated by the use of the words “unborn child” rather than the medically-accepted term “fetus”. This legislation is about shaming a woman about her personal, private choices.
- Whether or not to view an ultrasound is a personal, private decision that should be made by a woman in consultation with her healthcare provider.
- Planned Parenthood believes honest communication is essential to a healthy provider-patient relationship. We are committed to helping women make their own informed and responsible decisions.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a leading women’s health organization, does not require an ultrasound during the first trimester as a medical necessity, although it is Planned Parenthood’s policy to perform an ultrasound before providing an abortion procedure
- Requiring ultrasounds places an extra financial burden on the woman by requiring her to seek out an additional provider if her primary provider does not have ultrasound equipment. Costs include the ultrasound, which is several hundred dollars (and may not be covered by insurance since it is not medically necessary), time off from work, co-payments, travel expenses (particularly burdensome for rural areas), etc. Providers would face an additional financial burden if they are forced to purchase ultrasound equipment, which range from \$10,000 to \$150,000. Small providers may be forced to forgo obstetrics which would be especially challenging to rural communities.