



OPPOSE HB 462/SB 484 Mandatory Ultrasound Patrons - Del. Byron & Sen. Vogel

HB 462/SB 484 mandates that every woman undergoing an abortion must first have an ultrasound to determine the gestation age of the fetus and she must be given the option to view the ultrasound image and hear the heartbeat. The doctor must document in writing the offer was made and her response kept in her medical records. Also, **HB 462/SB 484** directs the Dept. of Health to compile a list of non-medical facilities that offer free ultrasounds and for the doctor to offer this information prior to the procedure.

Health care decisions are best made by individuals and their medical providers NOT politicians.

- The government should not be in the position of mandating medical procedures. Lawmakers are not doctors. Routine ultrasound is not considered medically necessary as a component of first-trimester abortion.
- A physician and patient, working together, are the best judges of which procedures are medically necessary. Patients should NOT be forced to undergo any procedure against their will or better judgment. This bill puts government into the examination room and lets politics come between a woman and her physician.
- This bill curtails a woman's constitutional rights to privacy and liberty by subjecting her to possibly unwanted and unnecessary medical procedures.

Mandatory ultrasounds place undue burdens on women seeking legal and safe abortion care.

- Mandatory ultrasound is simply a delay tactic that imposes additional costs and prolongs a woman's access to a procedure she has already agonized over.
- If the doctor does not have ultrasound equipment, a woman must find another doctor to perform the ultrasound prior to the abortion, which would impose additional waiting delays and costs.
- Further delays in procuring abortion services, especially for medically unnecessary requirements, unjustifiably and significantly increase the risk to a woman's life or health.ⁱ This is especially true for low-income women or women from rural areas who may have to travel long distances to access healthcare.
- Mandating an ultrasound could create barriers to accessing abortion services. Ultrasounds can add up to **\$200-\$1200** to the cost of an abortion procedureⁱⁱ and may not be covered by insurance when they are not medically necessary.
- Mandatory ultrasound increases a woman's difficulty in obtaining abortion care. Women especially affected are:
 - Women in abusive relationships, young, rural, and low-income women who may have to travel long distances, lack transportation, need childcare and/or must take time off of work.

HB 462/SB 484 requires healthcare providers to make referrals to fake clinics.

- HB 261 directs the Dept. of Health to compile of list of "facilities that provide free ultrasounds." It is well known that these facilities are "crisis pregnancy centers" and are not medical offices, not bound by HIPPA and not regulated by any state health board. CPCs' mission is to persuade women to change their minds about having an abortion sometimes using misinformation about risks of the procedure.

HB 462/SB 484 places no requirements on physicians to perform ultrasounds under any other circumstances.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact no other medical diagnostic test is mandated by the code of Virginia, revealing the true intent of the bill: to shame and discourage women from receiving legal and safe abortion services.

Virginia Pro-Choice Coalition

ACLU of VA · Virginia League of Women Voters · Jewish Community Relations Council
NARAL Pro-Choice VA · National Assoc. of Social Workers · National Council of Jewish Women of VA
National Council of Jewish Women of VA · Planned Parent Advocates of VA · Virginia NOW

ⁱ “The risk of death associated with abortion increases with the length of pregnancy, from one death for every one million abortions at or before eight weeks to . . . one per 11,000 at 21 or more weeks.” GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, *Facts on Induced Abortion*, May 2010, available at http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html.

ⁱⁱ R. Benson Gold & E. Nash, GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, *Guttmacher Policy Review*, “State Abortion Counseling Policies and the Fundamental Principles of Informed Consent,” Fall 2007, Vol. 10, No. 4, available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/gpr/10/4/gpr100406.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, ultrasounds can be used to prevent and diagnose heart disease (the leading cause of death among women and men in the United States), breast cancer, prostate cancer, and musculoskeletal and organ-related diseases. See, e.g., Nat’l Institutes of Health, MedlinePlus, *Ultrasound*, “Specific Conditions,” available at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ultrasound.html#cat42>. HB 2433 does not address these or other uses of ultrasound and does not mandate the use of ultrasound to diagnose or inform a patient about any condition other than pregnancy.