



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

ACTION ALERT: Sonogram Required for an Abortion (HB 15 & SB 16)

The bad news: The Texas House and Senate have each passed bills requiring a woman to have a sonogram and view (or hear a description of) the image prior to having an abortion. LWV-TX has expressed strong opposition to both bills.

There are significant differences between HB 15 (S. Miller) and SB 16 (Patrick). The House has not taken up the Senate version of the sonogram bill, and the two chambers may be headed toward a standoff over the differing measures.

Requested action:

We have an opportunity for meaningful action while senators and representatives squirm and squabble over these competing versions of a bad bill: Contact your representatives AND senators NOW and ask them to vote against the sonogram measure in whatever form it is brought to the House or Senate floor and/or to a conference committee We oppose both HB 15 and SB 16. Get contact information for your senator and representative by putting in your address at: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>

Who should receive the Action Alert?:

Members. Members should also contact their friends, share this information and ask them to make calls and contact their friends.

When:

Calls and/or faxes should be sent as soon as possible as additional action is expected soon.

Talking points or what to say:

- Focus on serious legislative issues and reject these sonogram measures that serve no useful purpose and, rather than protecting women's health, seem to be aimed at intimidating and discouraging them from obtaining safe, legal abortions.
- The decision to end a pregnancy is a private one that should be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor, and the proposed laws would impose an insensitive and unnecessary intrusion upon the physician/patient relationship.
- It is ironic that the proponents of these bills have been outspoken opponents of health care reform, describing it as government interference in health care. Yet these same people are very eager to impose government regulations on women's reproductive health decisions.
- The bills are apparently intended to convince the woman to carry her fetus to term, yet proposed budget cuts will impede further her ability to support the child.
- It should be noted that the sonogram prescribed is not the "jelly-belly" method, but an invasive vaginal probe.

Questions can be directed to Julie Lowenberg at jmlowenberg@sbcglobal.net.