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SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 786: THE ULTRASOUND OPPORTUNITY ACT

House Bill 786 simply requires that a woman seeking an abortion, after 6 weeks gestation, be offered *the opportunity* to 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. The offer must be made at least one hour before the procedure takes place.

This requirement is far from radical, considering:

- Most medical professionals operating in the abortion industry already perform ultrasounds before every abortion.
- There is medical evidence supporting the practice. Ultrasounds assist doctors and protect the health and welfare of women.
- For example: an ultrasound can rule out an ectopic pregnancy, allow the medical professional to see exactly where the child is, and help to more accurately calculate gestational age.

Just as importantly, ultrasound requirements ensure informed choice. Medical evidence indicates that women feel bonded to their children after seeing them on the ultrasound screen. Once that bond is established, researchers argue, a woman begins to feel invested in her unborn child.

House Bill 786 allows a woman considering an abortion the option to see her unborn child and hear 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, House Bill 786 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.