

Guilt trips would not end abortions

Ultrasound proposal is misguided, says **Erin Goldman of Dallas**

Texas is one of three states considering bills that would require doctors to show an ultrasound image of a fetus before a woman gets an abortion.

Sixteen states currently have laws related to pre-abortion ultrasounds; some require they be performed, while others require women be referred to a place where they can obtain a free ultrasound.

Nebraska and Indiana, too, are considering the ultrasound requirement. Nebraska Sen. Tony Fulton claims that the bill is about informed consent. "Many times, these are young mothers who are in vulnerable situations. And they are about to make a very grave choice," he said.

Placing patients in such a position is not "informed consent." It's a guilt trip. The claim that mostly young women are making rash, ill-informed decisions is a ludicrous generalization. It is a far graver choice for a woman who does not have the means to properly care for a child to bring her baby into the world.

Abortion is an unbelievably difficult choice for any woman to make, and her decision should remain between her and her doctor. In Texas, it is legal to have an abortion before the third trimester; it is a woman's right to choose. Where's the choice in mandating that women view an ultrasound as a prerequisite to abortion?

When male pro-life legislators utilize a

diagnostic procedure that is performed already, it shames women and strips them of their rights.

Last week, Gov. Rick Perry welcomed hundreds of anti-abortion activists outside the state Capitol. He promised to prohibit embryonic stem cell research in Texas and bragged about his record for passing more restrictions on abortion than any prior Texas governor. He also reprimanded Washington for its "misplaced priorities." He said the issue was as simple as this: "Do you value life?"

Well, I'd like to ask the governor the same thing. Is putting an infant in the hands of a mother who is unprepared indicative of valuing life?

One commenter on the dallasnews.com story discussing the proposal said: "Irresponsible sexual behavior can result in an unplanned pregnancy. Be an adult, take responsibility and do what is right."

I agree. Irresponsible sexual behavior can result in unplanned pregnancy. However, to suggest that a woman should be forced to go through with an unplanned pregnancy regardless of her age, socioeconomic situation and marital status is not responsible nor right.

Perhaps our legislators should spend more time in an effort to provide access to sex education and preventative health care and less time chastising women for "murdering" their infants. As far as I'm concerned, my

birthday is the day I was born — not the day I was conceived.

Right-to-life advocates who declare they are attempting to save lives and speak for those who have no voice should concern themselves with children in foster care or who have not been adopted. These are the children who truly need representation.

Our tax dollars should go to organizations like Child Protective Services. In a recent 18-month period, Texas workers who are responsible for visiting abused children saw only 74 percent of their children each month. With inadequate funding, caseworkers are often overworked and underpaid, and thus, leave the agency.

Gov. Perry, gearing up for the 2010 gubernatorial election, continues to emphasize his pro-life, anti-stem-cell research views with support for bills like creating a "Choose Life" license plate and pre-abortion ultrasound requirements. However, he neglects to promote the causes that affect each and every Texan day-to-day.

I'm just glad I'll be of legal voting age by 2010.



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