

ULTRASOUND POLICY

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"Ultrasound examination may thus result in fewer abortions and more desired pregnancies."

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Ultrasound legislation: Any medical procedure should be preceded by information sufficient to provide the patient with the knowledge necessary to consent to the procedure intelligently. Thus, with respect to ultrasounds:

1. An ultrasound should be performed on an abortion-minded woman prior to any abortion.
2. All abortionists (physicians or medically-qualified persons) should be required to provide an opportunity to the woman to a) see the ultrasound as it is being done, b) hear information and an explanation about the ultrasound, including gestational age, heart beat, and other information about fetal development, and c) to be given that information after the ultrasound, including the ultrasound image and description.
3. The opportunity to see and hear about the ultrasound must be genuine, and the information provided must be accurate and clearly communicated.
4. Women must be required to sign a form thereafter, certifying that they were given the opportunity to see and hear about the ultrasound.
5. The requirements to perform an ultrasound must have exceptions for endangerment to the life of the mother and for rape and incest.



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Why ultrasounds are important:

Ultrasound viewing significantly reduces the likelihood of the mother choosing abortion.

- One study conducted in a pregnancy resource center in the U.S. reported that women planning to abort their child were 2 – 3 ½ times more likely to keep their children after viewing their ultrasounds.¹
- A study conducted in Oregon concluded that women at high risk of having abortion who viewed ultrasounds were only 30 percent likely to continue with the procedure, as compared to the 75 percent of women who did not view ultrasounds.²
- One study reported that women at risk for abortion who viewed ultrasounds and received counseling were 60 percent more likely to choose life than those who had counseling without ultrasounds.³
- Eight in ten pregnancy resource centers report that “abortion-minded” women decide to keep their babies after seeing ultrasound images.⁴
- According to an executive director of an Iowa pregnancy resource center, 90 percent of women who see their baby by ultrasound choose life.⁵
- One pregnancy resource center director in Baton Rouge states that “Ninety-eight percent of women who have ultrasounds choose to carry to term.”⁶

Ultrasounds have positive health benefits for the mothers, including greater understanding of their bodies, their pregnancies and the development of their babies. An ultrasound viewing also helps identify possibilities of ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage, thereby providing women with better information regarding possible medical treatment.

Ultrasounds help with medical accuracy. Abortion clinics have frequently been accused of not providing medically accurate information.⁷ An ultrasound viewing significantly decreases the opportunity for inaccurate developmental information on the pregnancy and baby. Given the importance of the decision, a pregnant woman deserves all of the information possible to make an informed choice. Viewing the child on ultrasound provides more information, not less.

¹ Patient Characteristics and attitudes about viewing an ultrasound in a pregnancy resource center: Chicago (a) and Boston (b) studies, Z. Harry Piotrowski, MS; Donald S. Childs, MD, FAAFP; Eric J. Keroack, MD, FACOG. American Public Health Association, 132 Annual Meeting, Washington DC, November 9, 2004

² <http://www.optionsprc.org/services/project-ultrasound>

³ <http://www.heartlink.org/oupdirectors.cfm>

⁴ “Moving Pictures” World Magazine, April 23, 2005

⁵ Columbia Magazine, January 2010, p.11

⁶ <http://www.projectultrasound.org/articles/article1.html>

⁷ <http://liveaction.org/>