

## Rally lets Texas Gov. Perry emphasize his anti-abortion credentials

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AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry greeted several hundred anti-abortion activists rallying outside the Capitol on Tuesday by promising to prevent embryonic stem cell research in the state and touting his record of enacting more restrictions on abortion than any previous Texas governor.

The governor and other GOP leaders, with an eye toward the 2010 elections, eagerly talked up their opposition to abortion and their support of further restrictions before a crowd that represented the base expected to largely determine the Republican primaries in March 2010.

Perry peppered his speech with barbs at Washington, citing President Barack Obama's expected reversal of the ban on federal funds for much embryonic stem cell research and his decision to lift the prohibition against U.S. money for international family-planning clinics that provide counseling or referrals about abortion services.

Perry's likely Republican primary opponent next year, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, has supported embryonic stem cell research. Without using her name, Perry railed against Washington and its "misplaced priorities," saying the issue was as basic as, "Do you value life?"


"As long as I am governor of the great state of Texas, I will oppose our taxpayers' dollars from being spent on research that ends human life," he said.

Quoting former President Ronald Reagan, a GOP hero, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst told the crowd that government should work to protect human life. Dewhurst said legislation he's backing this year would give women seeking abortions "a reason to stop and think."

Attorney General Greg Abbott also addressed the rally.

The major anti-abortion bill lawmakers are expected to consider this year would require that doctors show a woman an ultrasound and play the sound of a heartbeat monitor before she could undergo an abortion.

At a news conference, a woman who is eight weeks pregnant was hooked up to a sonogram, and a video of her fetus was projected onto a screen. The head and the undefined developing body of the 1.6-centimeter fetus could be seen.

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HARRY CABLUCK/The Associated Press

**Gov. Rick Perry** (back to camera) speaks to Texas abortion opponents, who will play an important role in the GOP gubernatorial primary in 2010. The race is expected to pit Perry against Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison.

"It's not a mass of tissue. It's a human life," said Sen. Dan Patrick, a Houston Republican who authored the bill.

Rep. Jessica Farrar, D-Houston, said the state already requires that women wait 24 hours and read material about abortion procedures. She said it should not impose itself further between a woman and her doctor.

"Medical procedures are best left to people in the medical profession and not someone with a political agenda," Ms. Farrar said. "This is designed to guilt and coerce a woman into a pregnancy that she might not be prepared for."

Ms. Farrar, a House Democratic leader, also said that if the same anti-abortion leaders would provide more access to contraceptives and broader sex education – instead of abstinence only – fewer abortions would be contemplated.

"If the right to life groups would try to prevent more unwanted pregnancies, we wouldn't be in this position," she said.