

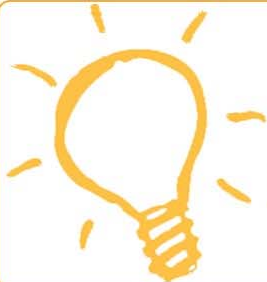
Perry, other leaders rally for bill at anti-abortion rally

**Measure would require doctors to
show an ultrasound to women
seeking abortions**

By **DAVID SALEH RAUF**
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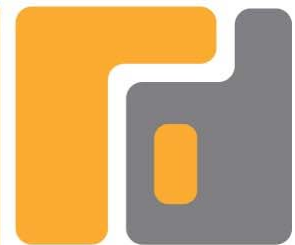
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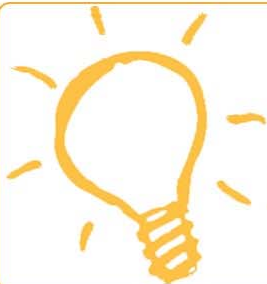
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Harry Cabluck Associated Press

Juda Myers, of Houston's Freedom Ministries, demonstrates at an anti-abortion rally attended by the governor and other leaders outside the Capitol on Tuesday.

AUSTIN — Three of Texas' top elected officials offered strong public endorsements Tuesday of a proposal that would require an ultrasound for most women seeking an abortion.

Speaking at a rally of hundreds of pro-life advocates, Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Attorney General Greg Abbott called for passage of legislation that requires abortion providers to perform an ultrasound prior to terminating a pregnancy and make the image available for the woman to view.

Supporters of the bill — authored by state Sen. Dan Patrick, R-Houston and state Rep. Frank Corte, R-San Antonio — say that by allowing a woman to look at her ultrasound “before there’s no going back,” the state could avoid some of the nearly 78,000 abortions conducted in 2007.

“Too often we see abortions that don’t need to happen,” Dewhurst said. “In my heart I got to believe that everybody wants to see fewer abortions, and they want to see more adoptions and that’s bluntly why I think this bill makes sense.”

Tuesday’s rally on the South Steps of the Capitol marked the second time Perry has publicly endorsed the ultrasound proposal since January.

In his State of the State address last month, he

urged lawmakers to pass the measure to add “another layer of protection for the most vulnerable Texans.

A similar ultrasound measure, also authored by Patrick, passed the Senate last session on a 22-8 vote. It later died in the House.

Foes say bill flawed

This session, abortion foes are making it their top legislative priority. But opponents say the bill is still flawed by mandates that will require a woman to listen to a heartbeat if one is audible and will force the doctor to describe features of the ultrasound, including fetus size.

“These are really things that might be very obtrusive and could be an opportunity to shame and humiliate the woman,” said Yvonne Gutierrez, Vice President for Community Affairs for The Planned Parenthood Trust of San Antonio.

“It’s simply not part of medical necessity.”

Lawmakers in 10 other states are considering pre-abortion ultrasound bills.

At least a dozen other states have similar laws on the books.

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