

October 4, 2011

Representative
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of FRC Action, the legislative action arm of Family Research Council, and the families we represent, I want to urge you to co-sponsor Rep. Michele Bachmann's bill: "The Heartbeat Informed Consent Act". This legislation ensures that a woman seeking an abortion receives an ultrasound and has the choice to view and hear the heartbeat of her unborn child before giving informed consent to receive an abortion.

Full informed consent is a legal and practical necessity for any patient before engaging in a multitude of medical procedures. Since abortion is a significant medical procedure, it is only logical that a patient be fully informed as to the specifics of what she is about to undergo, being afforded the opportunity to observe or listen to the heartbeat of the unborn within her own body. An unborn child's heart begins to beat at about the 21st day after fertilization.

Many women, post-abortion, report that they were never told about and were unaware of the heartbeat and fetal development of their unborn child at the time they had an abortion. Subsequently, many women suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder for doing something they would not have done "had they known." Thus, it is imperative that healthcare practitioners be required to fully disclose the nature of both the procedure and the stage of the child's development, in order to prevent such uninformed decision-making.

Moreover, there is no burden placed on a healthcare facility, practitioner, or patient by requiring a pre-abortion, ultrasound viewing. According to *2009 Contraception*, many abortion facilities already confirm a pregnancy with an ultrasound evaluation. A law that simply requires abortion providers to make known to a woman, in-office, the results of her ultrasound, either by image or audio, is a mechanism that merely expands the patient's knowledge prior to making such a significant decision. And, just as with any other medical or safety presentation, the patient may always choose to avert her eyes or not listen when offered this information.

The choice to undergo an abortion is a serious one with possible psychological, emotional and physical ramifications that only the patient herself will bear throughout the duration of her lifetime. "The Heartbeat Informed Consent Act" is a law that gives a woman the information necessary to make the best decision possible regarding her life and that of her unborn child. We, therefore, urge you to co-sponsor the "Heartbeat Informed Consent Act".

Sincerely,



Thomas McClusky
Senior Vice President