

## HB 1238 -- Consent Requirements for Obtaining an Abortion

Sponsor: Davis

This bill changes the laws regarding the consent requirements for obtaining an abortion. Abortions cannot be performed or induced without the voluntary and informed consent given freely and without coercion of the woman at least 24 hours prior to the abortion. The physician performing or inducing the abortion must provide orally and in writing:

- (1) The physician's name;
- (2) Medically accurate information including a description of the proposed abortion method, the medical risks, alternatives to the abortion, and follow-up care information;
- (3) The gestational age of the unborn child; and
- (4) The anatomical and physiological characteristics of the unborn child.

The physician performing or inducing the abortion or a qualified professional must:

- (1) Provide the pregnant woman with printed or video materials from the Department of Health and Senior Services that describe the anatomical and physiological characteristics of the unborn child's brain and heart functions, extremities and internal organs; various methods of abortion and the risks associated with each method; the possibility of causing pain to the unborn child; alternatives to abortion; and that the father of an unborn child is liable to provide child support, even if he has offered to pay for an abortion. The materials must be available from the department by November 30, 2010, and must be legible, objective, unbiased, and scientifically accurate. All information provided to the pregnant woman must be given to her in a private room to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and no fear of coercion. If needed, an interpreter will be provided. All information must be provided at least 24 hours before payment for an abortion can be accepted;
- (2) Provide the woman with an opportunity to view an ultrasound and hear the heartbeat of the unborn child at a local health facility that offers these services free of charge at least 24 hours prior to the abortion;
- (3) Explain that coercing a pregnant woman to get an abortion is illegal and she is free to withhold or withdraw her consent to the abortion at any time without fear of losing treatment and

assistance benefits; and

(4) Prominently display statements encouraging a pregnant woman seeking an abortion to contact agencies that help women carry an unborn child to full term and that no one can coerce a person to have an abortion.

The woman must certify in writing on a checklist form provided by the department that she has received all of the required materials; had an opportunity to view an active ultrasound image of the unborn child and hear the heartbeat; and given her voluntary and informed consent, freely and without coercion, to the abortion procedure. No abortion will be performed or induced on an unborn child of 22 weeks gestational age or older unless the mother is given the opportunity to have a pain alleviating drug administered to the child. The physician must retain a copy of the form in the patient's medical record.

In the event of a medical emergency that results in an abortion, the physician must certify in writing the nature and circumstances of the emergency; and the certification must be kept in the abortion-performing facility's permanent file for seven years.

All abortion facilities must display a sign that notifies a pregnant woman that it is illegal to coerce a woman to have an abortion.

The department must maintain a toll-free, confidential, 24-hour hotline telephone number for callers to obtain regional information about abortions, risks, and alternatives to abortions and make the information available on the department's web site.

An employer cannot institute an occupational qualification that an employee or applicant seek or obtain an abortion.

Only licensed physicians can perform or induce an abortion. Anyone violating this provision will be guilty of a class B felony.

Any person who performs or induces an abortion and knows that the pregnant woman has been coerced will be guilty of a class C felony, except in the case of a medical emergency. If the abortion provider has cause to believe that a woman has been a victim of a coerced abortion and the victim is:

(1) Younger than 18 years of age, a report of suspected abuse must be made to the Department of Social Services;

(2) A person in the care or custody of the Department of Mental

Health, a report of suspected abuse must be made to the department;

(3) A person 60 years of age or older who needs assistance to perform activities to meet his or her essential human needs, a report of suspected abuse must be made to the Department of Health and Senior Services; or

(4) An adult who has been abused or stalked by a present or former family or household member, the abortion provider must give the woman information about orders of protection.