



**Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee
March 20, 2013**

SB 726 -- Health – Medical Procedures – Ultrasound Options

OPPOSE

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The ACLU of Maryland opposes SB 726, which dictates to physicians performing abortions how they are to handle the use of an ultrasound with their patients.

The bill *requires* a physician to offer a woman patient the opportunity to watch an active ultrasound *only if the ultrasound is performed in relation to an abortion*. It thereby explicitly targets only women seeking abortions. It leaves no professional medical discretion to the physician to determine what is in the best interest of the patient. If this service were mandated by sound medical practice and the protection of women's health, there would be no justification for limiting it to ultrasounds performed prior to or in connection with a single reproductive health care procedure.

SB 726 intrudes into the practice of medicine and the patient-doctor relationship to politicize that relationship with respect to a single aspect of care. We support principles that maintain good health practices, women's decision-making, and strong, healthy families. Many, if not all, of the facilities this bill would target already offer women receiving abortions the option of viewing an ultrasound, but the physician can use their judgment to determine circumstances in which that might not be appropriate. The ACLU believes, and works hard to ensure, that every woman has the best, medically accurate information so that she can make the right decision for her and her circumstances, without undue pressure. It is clear by the outrage recently expressed by many women in response to various abortion ultrasound bills in other states that this is what women want as well.

We urge an unfavorable report on SB 726.