

■ Requirements for Ultrasound

BACKGROUND: Since the mid-1990s, several states have moved to make ultrasound part of abortion service provision. Some laws and policies require that a woman seeking an abortion receive information on accessing ultrasound services, while others require that a woman undergo an ultrasound before an abortion. Since routine ultrasound is not considered medically necessary as a component of first-trimester abortion, the requirements appear to be a veiled attempt to personify the fetus and dissuade a woman from obtaining an abortion. Moreover, an ultrasound can add significantly to the cost of the procedure.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 11 states require verbal counseling or written materials to include information on accessing ultrasound services.
- 20 states regulate the provision of ultrasound by abortion providers.
 - 7 states mandate that an abortion provider perform an ultrasound on each woman seeking an abortion, and require the provider to offer the woman the opportunity to view the image.
 - 9 states require that a woman be provided with the opportunity to view an ultrasound image if her provider performs the procedure as part of the preparation for an abortion.
 - 5 states require that a woman be provided with the opportunity to view an ultrasound image.



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ULTRASOUND REQUIREMENTS

| STATE | INFORMATION ON ACCESSING ULTRASOUND SERVICES | PROVISION OF ULTRASOUND | | | |
|----------------|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| | | Required for Each Abortion; The Provider Must Display and Describe the Image | Required for Each Abortion; The Provider Must Offer the Woman the Opportunity to View the Image | If Performed as Part of Preparation for the Abortion, the Provider Must Offer the Woman the Opportunity to View the Image | Offered by the Provider to the Woman |
| Alabama | | | X | | |
| Arizona | | | X | | |
| Arkansas | | | | X | |
| Florida | | | X | | |
| Georgia | Verbal | | | X | |
| Idaho | | | | X | |
| Indiana | Verbal | | | | X |
| Kansas | Written | | X | | |
| Louisiana | | | X ^Ω | | |
| Michigan | Written* | | | X | |
| Mississippi | | | X | | |
| Missouri | Written | | | | X |
| Nebraska | Verbal and written | | | X [†] | |
| North Carolina | Written | § ^ξ | | | |
| North Dakota | | | | | X [‡] |
| Ohio | | | | X | |
| Oklahoma | Verbal and written | § ^ξ | | | |
| South Carolina | Written | | | X | |
| South Dakota | | | | | X |
| Texas | | X | | | |
| Utah | Verbal | | | X ^Ω | X |
| West Virginia | | | | X | |
| Wisconsin | Verbal and written | | | | |
| TOTAL | 11 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 5 |

§ This law is temporarily unenforceable pending a court decision.

* Included in written counseling materials although not specifically mandated by state law.

Ω The woman will also be offered the option to hear a detailed description of the image and in Louisiana also be offered a picture of it.

† If an ultrasound is requested by the woman, the provider will also display the image so that the woman can view it.

‡ If performed, an ultrasound must take place 24 hours in advance of the abortion.

ξ The law allows the woman to decline to view the image and in Texas the woman may decline to listen to the description under certain circumstances.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For information on state legislative and policy activity, click on Guttmacher's [Monthly State Update](#), for state-level policy information see Guttmacher's [State Policies in Brief](#) series, and for information and data on reproductive health issues, go to Guttmacher's [State Center](#). To see state-specific reproductive health information go to Guttmacher's [Data Center](#), and for abortion specific information click on [State Facts About Abortion](#). To keep up with new state relevant data and analysis sign up for the [State News Quarterly Listserv](#).

Gold RB, [All that's old is new again: the long campaign to persuade women to forego abortion](#), *Guttmacher Policy Review*, 2009, 12(2):19–22.

Gold RB and Nash E, [State abortion counseling policies and the fundamental principles of informed consent](#), *Guttmacher Policy Review*, 2007, 10(4):6–13.