

## Utah bill would impose a pre-abortion ultrasound requirement

By [Bethany Rodgers](#)

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Women in Utah would have to undergo an ultrasound as a prerequisite to an abortion under a bill unveiled Wednesday in the Legislature.

Moreover, the physician or technician performing the ultrasound would have to describe "the presence and location of each unborn child in the uterus," display the images so that a woman can see them and make the fetal heartbeat audible to the woman, if possible, the legislation states.

The bill, sponsored by freshman Rep. Steve Christiansen, stipulates that nothing would prevent a woman from "averting her eyes" from the ultrasound images or asking the physician to lower the volume of the heartbeat.

A physician would not be allowed to perform an abortion unless a woman presents a completed form demonstrating she has met the ultrasound requirement. Doctors who disregard the mandate would be liable for fines up to \$100,000 for the first offense and \$250,000 for each subsequent offense, according to [HB364](#).

The proposed requirements would replace the current law, which says that a woman has the right to undergo and view an ultrasound "upon her request."

Alliance for a Better Utah, a group that advocates for progressive policies, swiftly condemned the proposal as a "cruel attempt to take away a woman's agency at an incredibly sensitive time."

"The sole purpose of this bill is to punish women for making the deeply complicated and personal decision to have an abortion," Lauren Simpson, the alliance's policy director, said in a prepared statement, noting that women already have the option to get an ultrasound if they choose.

The ACLU of Utah also blasted the proposal, saying the bill is "medically unnecessary" and aimed at "creating anguish" for Utah women.

But Merrilee Boyack, a [leader in the group Abortion-Free Utah](#), said the ultrasound will arm women with "good, clear, accurate information."

"I think hiding the scientific reality of what they are experiencing and the development of the child, I think that is cruel," she said.

Three [states currently require abortion providers to perform an ultrasound](#) on women and to show and describe the images to them, according to the Guttmacher Institute, research and policy organization that supports abortion rights.

Christiansen, a West Jordan Republican, did not immediately return a call requesting comment.





[brodgers@sltrib.com](mailto:brodgers@sltrib.com)