



HB1227 - Abortion – Ultrasound Requirement

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee
March 13, 2020 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: OPPOSE

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee **an unfavorable report on HB1227 - Abortion – Ultrasound Requirement**, sponsored by Delegate Joseph Boteler.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure that every individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to plan for their future and their families, and has all the information necessary to make an informed choice that affirms their wishes. [Forced ultrasound laws](#), however, do none of these. Rather, they raise the costs of abortion care, cause emotional harm, and impose additional burdens on individuals' ability to exercise bodily autonomy.¹

The 2019 Supreme Court case [EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Meier](#) challenged a Kentucky law which required clinicians to show, describe, and share sounds from fetal ultrasounds to patients prior to an abortion—a law essentially identical to HB1227.² **For the case, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and other well-respected medical organizations filed an amicus brief explaining that the forced ultrasound laws do not provide patients with medical benefit, and specifically cause harm to patients.** Maureen Phipps, MD, MPH, chief executive officer of ACOG, said it best: "In no other field of medicine are patients required by law to view images of the inside of their own body [under the guise of understanding their medical or physical condition.](#)"³ This is particularly true in cases where an individual or family has to make the difficult decision to terminate a wanted, nonviable pregnancy.

It is worth noting that if a pregnant individual wants to see her ultrasound prior to getting an abortion she is already able to do so. However, forcing an individual to hear or see unwanted information—even if the patient asks the clinician to stop—is inhumane and unethical, and interferes with the practice of medicine. For all of these reasons, NARAL Pro-choice Maryland urges an **unfavorable committee report on HB1227 Abortion – Ultrasound Requirement**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Rewire News. Legislative Tracker: Forced Ultrasound. 2018. <https://rewire.news/legislative-tracker/law-topic/forced-ultrasound/>

² EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Meier. Supreme Court of the United States. 2019.

³ ACOG Leads Coalition of Major Medical Organizations in Submitting Amicus Brief in *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Meier*. 2019.