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Perry wants Texas to ban abortion after 20 weeks



The Washington, D.C.-based Cato Institute gives Texas Gov. Rick Perry a C when it comes to fiscal conservatism.

Ronald Martinez/Getty Images

By CHRISTY HOPPE – December 11th, 2012

Gov. Rick Perry, who has led the charge against abortions, said he will push for new restrictions when the Legislature convenes next month, including one that would outlaw abortions after 20 weeks into a pregnancy.

Perry cited laws passed in 10 other states that settled on the 20-week cutoff as the point in development when a fetus might feel pain. Previously, based on the Supreme Court's *Roe vs. Wade* decision, elective abortions could be performed up to the time when the fetus was viable and could live outside the womb.

Experts say that less than 2 percent of abortions occur after 20 weeks, and many of those are tied to medical conditions.

Perry also said he would push for greater state scrutiny and regulations of abortion clinics, making them qualify as ambulatory surgical centers. He also would have doctors who perform abortions maintain admitting privileges at hospitals. The requirements for

clinics would be prohibitively costly and many private practice or clinic doctors do not necessarily have relationships with hospitals.

Last session, Perry helped pass the sonogram bill that mandates women undergo transvaginal ultrasounds before obtaining an abortion, and requires doctors to verbally describe the fetal development, even if it is against the patient's will.

“Over the last decade, Texas has taken extraordinary steps to protect the lives of the unborn, but when 80,000 lives continue to be lost to abortion each year in our state, we know our work is far from over,” Perry said.

The Legislature last year also cut funding for women's health programs by two-thirds because of budget constraints.

Pro-abortion rights advocates said Perry's support of these initiatives amounts to political pandering at the cost of women's health and medical autonomy.

“This proposed abortion ban is a cruel attempt by anti-choice extremists to curb access to care for women in the most desperate of circumstances. The reality is that while most women welcome pregnancy and can look forward to a safe childbirth, for some, pregnancy can be dangerous,” said Heather Busby, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas.

“Every pregnancy is different. No politician can possibly decide what is best for a woman and her family in every circumstance,” she said.

Bebe Anderson, of the Center for Reproductive Rights, said Texas', “unprecedented and unrelenting assaults on women's reproductive rights in 2011 are causing hardship for women in Texas every single day. And now the governor has made it clear that Texas women will once again be public enemy number one in 2013.”