

Support HB 1609 - Mitigate the Harm of New Hampshire's 24-Week Abortion Ban and Ultrasound Mandate

Bill Summary: HB 1609 would amend RSA 329:44 to provide an exception from the prohibition on abortion after 24 weeks in cases of “fetal abnormalities incompatible with life” and construe the ultrasound requirement to “require the performance of an ultrasound only if the provider either knows that the fetus has a gestational age of at least 24 weeks or is conscious of a substantial risk that the fetus has a gestational age of at least 24 weeks.”

Requiring an ultrasound to obtain an abortion creates a medically unnecessary barrier to abortion access. This requirement, mandated by politicians, not doctors, is not based on scientific evidence or supported by any medical literature. Lawmakers should remove this law whose sole purpose is to shame and coerce a pregnant person who has decided to end their pregnancy. Regardless of how you feel about abortion, such extreme political interference in the doctor-patient relationship should be a cause of serious concern to anyone seeking medical care.

Current law places patients at risk. New Hampshire's current 24-week abortion ban does not include an exception for fatal fetal anomaly and this diagnosis and its subsequent confirmation may not come before the 24-week mark in their pregnancy, leaving these pregnant people without any choice. In addition, pregnant people who receive a fatal fetal diagnosis also face a higher risk of health complications as pregnancy progresses. This legislation would better ensure that pregnant people have the right to pursue the avenue that is best for their health and family.

It is time for lawmakers to draw a line in the sand. With *Roe* under threat, New Hampshire's current abortion ban is yet another reminder that the fundamental right to abortion is under real threat in the Granite State. Now is the time for the legislature to draw a line in the sand and make clear that pregnant people should be able to seek abortion care without shame, stigma, or unnecessary obstacles.

The vast majority of Granite Staters support safe, legal abortion. Sixty-six percent of Granite Staters support keeping abortion legal in all/most cases, rejecting the idea that bodies are public property to be regulated by government officials.ⁱ In fact, only three states have a higher percentage of residents who support safe, legal abortion access.ⁱⁱ As this polling makes clear, Granite Staters don't appreciate government intervention into their private health care decisions.

Support HB 1609 – Better protect the health and safety of Granite Staters

ⁱ Jeff Diamant & Aleksandra, *Do state laws on abortion reflect public opinion?*, Pew Research Center, Jan. 21, 2020, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/01/21/do-state-laws-on-abortion-reflect-public-opinion/>.

ⁱⁱ Jeff Diamant & Aleksandra, *Do state laws on abortion reflect public opinion?*, Pew Research Center, Jan. 21, 2020, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/01/21/do-state-laws-on-abortion-reflect-public-opinion/>.