Gov. Perry Announces Initiatives to Protect Life

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.
Tuesday, December 11, 2012  •  Houston, Texas  •  Speech

I'd like to give a special thanks to several people here who work at pregnancy resource centers across Houston, for everything they do to promote life in Texas.

There are many more active in this effort, and together, you and your groups all do so much to help protect life, and I'd like to thank you for that.

In Texas, the legislature meets for only 140 days every other year, and we have a session starting in just a few weeks.

As supporters of life, we have an obligation to make sure that every one of those days counts when it comes to protecting our most vulnerable citizens.

Over the last decade, we've done that.

We've banned the use of tax dollars for abortion procedures in Texas, and stood strong in the face of the expected backlash from that decision, proclaiming the truth that protecting the rights of abortion providers and protecting women's health are not the same thing.

We've passed laws requiring both parental notification and parental consent to their daughter's abortion, ensuring parents will be involved, ready to provide much-needed guidance and advice at the most critical of moments.

Last session, we passed, and I'm proud to say I signed, a law that prohibits abortion without the mother first having a sonogram, because we believe that unborn children deserve the respect of recognition before their lives are tragically cut short.

We took those steps to help ensure that those making the decision between life and death make the most informed, responsible, decision possible.

But when 80,000 lives are lost to abortion each year in our state, we know our work is far from over.

This session, I'm calling on the legislature to strengthen our ban on the procedure, prohibiting abortion at the point a baby can feel the pain of being killed.

We have an obligation to end that kind of cruelty.

Now, to be clear, my goal, and the goal of many of those joining me here today, is to make abortion, at any stage, a thing of the past.

While Roe v. Wade prevents us from taking that step, it does allow states to do some things to protect life if they can show there is a compelling state interest.

I don't think there is any issue that better fits the definition of "compelling state interest" than preventing the suffering of our state's unborn.

We cannot, and we will not, stand idly by while the unborn are going through
the agony of having their lives ended.

Using the adoption process and community support we can ensure each and every child is born to a loving home.

That is our goal, and someday we will meet that goal.

In the meantime, I'm also calling for measures to ensure the safety of women undergoing this procedure.

Abortion clinics should be held to the same standards as any other kind of surgical facility in the state of Texas.

And we also need to require any physician performing abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital.

These are both matters of common sense, as any patient should have the expectation that facilities being used are up to standards, and that, if there's an emergency situation, they can receive the care they need.

Again, the ideal world is a world without abortion.

Until then, however, we will continue to pass laws to ensure abortions are as rare as possible under existing law.
Gov. Perry Announces Initiatives to Protect Life

Tuesday, December 11, 2012 • Houston, Texas • Press Release

Gov. Rick Perry outlined initiatives to strengthen the state's ban on abortions and strengthen standards of care for women seeking abortions. He was joined by Senator-elect Donna Campbell and pro-life groups at the Source Pregnancy Center in Houston.

"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," Gov. Perry said. "In Texas, the Legislature meets for only 140 days every other year. As supporters of life, we have an obligation to make sure that every one of those days counts when it comes to protecting our most vulnerable citizens."

Ten states have already recognized the need to protect unborn children who are capable of feeling pain. The governor also outlined measures to strengthen standards of care for women seeking abortions, including requiring physicians who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital, and requiring abortion clinics to be licensed as ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs).

"It's time to acknowledge 21st century medicine and technology with 21st century legislation. We need to protect the tiniest and weakest of Texans, our children, both born and unborn," Senator-elect Campbell said. "In addition, we should champion women's health by holding facilities and physicians that perform abortions to the same standards as ambulatory surgery centers and physicians. Our duty is to protect the general welfare of Texans, and I will work everyday to keep Texas strong and healthy."

Abortion is the second most common surgical procedure in America, and the only one in Texas not currently required to be performed at a hospital, physician's office or surgical center prior to 16 weeks gestation. The provisions outlined by Gov. Perry ensure patients have appropriate access to emergency medical care in the event of a complication, and that facilities are safe, sanitary and capable of handling possible complications.

Gov. Perry has worked diligently to protect unborn life in Texas. He signed both parental notification and parental consent laws to ensure parents are involved in their minor daughters' major decisions, along with a ban that ensures tax dollars are not used to support abortion facilities. He also supported and signed the Woman's Right to Know Act, and has worked with lawmakers to fund and promote alternatives to abortion. Last session, the governor signed a law that will prevent abortions in Texas until after the mother has had a sonogram, because women deserve to have all the information before making such a life-ending decision.

To view the governor's full remarks, please visit: