

Florida Governor Vetoes Pro-Life Bill

✖ Florida Gov. Charlie Crist on Friday vetoed a bill that had been described as the most significant pro-life measure in the state's history.

HB 1143 required women seeking abortions to obtain an ultrasound beforehand and have the image explained to them. The bill also prohibited private health insurers that receive state or federal subsidies from providing coverage for abortions.

Crist expressed concerns about HB 1143 shortly after it was passed in late April and strongly hinted that he would oppose the measure in mid-May. After Friday's veto, he said the bill "places an inappropriate burden on [a] woman seeking to terminate a pregnancy," the *Tampa Tribune* reported.

Crist, who is running for the U.S. Senate, has said he "strongly supports the sanctity of life" but recently removed the pro-life section from his campaign website. In April he changed his party affiliation from Republican to Independent in hopes of defeating Republican newcomer Marco Rubio, who is pro-life.

Crist's office said more than 36,000 people wrote or e-mailed in

support of the bill,
while 27,000 people lobbied for a veto, prompting some
Republican lawmakers to
say the governor ignored the will of the people.

But

Crist said the bill's supporters may have been part of an
organized effort, the
Tribune reported. He said he heard anecdotally that most
Floridians
opposed the measure. A May Ipsos Public Affairs poll showed
that 55 percent of voters wanted Crist to veto HB 1143 while
31 percent
supported it.

John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy
Council, which
lobbied for the bill, called the veto "profoundly
disappointing."

"[Crist's] often stated commitment as a
populist for 'the people' is apparently meaningless as the
majority of
Floridians are pro-life and support the bill as evidenced by
the overwhelming
show of support," Stemberger said. "He has now gone full
circle from being
pro-choice in his original U.S. Senate bid to being 'pro-life'
in his bid for governor and now he [has] clearly defined
himself as pro-abortion once again."

Stemberger said

pro-life leaders will continue to work to pass an ultrasound bill. He
said this
is the fourth year such legislation has been defeated.