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## Pro-life, pro-choice Democrats split over ultrasound rule

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A battle over whether to require medical personnel to offer **ultrasounds** to women seeking abortions divided pro-life from pro-choice Democrats in the Illinois House Thursday.

Rep. Joseph Lyons, a pro-life Democrat from Chicago, beat back numerous amendments to the proposal, **House Bill 4085**, that he said were hostile, including one that would have required doctors to tell men the potential risks and side effects of erectile dysfunction drugs.

The amendment's sponsor, Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, said her idea would establish some parity because Lyons' bill presumes that "women do not have the capacity to make health decisions with their doctors."

"It's simply about fairness," Cassidy said.

Lyons said his legislation would add only seven words to the process for getting an abortion: "Would you like to see the ultrasound?"

Lyons and other supporters of the bill – predominantly Republicans – said the bill, unlike proposals in some other states, would not force women to undergo ultrasounds. But that did not allay the objections of pro-choice lawmakers.

Lyons yanked the legislation from the floor, saying some lawmakers who were ready to vote for it were not present on Thursday. He said he would get the deadline for passage extended for the bill.

The debate got bogged down in an argument over legislative process.

Three of the rejected amendments were introduced by Cassidy and Reps. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Champaign and Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, all pro-choice, female Democrats. They criticized the House Democratic leadership for assigning Lyons' bill to the socially conservative House Agriculture Committee, which they said was demeaning toward women.

Lyons, who is on Speaker Michael Madigan's leadership team and often presides over the House, defended the legislation's committee assignment, noting that it would not have gotten through another committee dominated by pro-choice lawmakers. But he also criticized House Democratic leadership for allowing all of the hostile amendments to be voted upon.

"If the Rules Committee will do this to me as a fellow member of leadership, think what they will do to you if the rule is there to try to hurt one of your bills or sabotage it in the Rules Committee," said Lyons, an assistant majority leader. "Don't let my bill be sabotaged by amendments that don't mean anything."

Normally, amendments are passed through with a simple voice vote, but Lyons asked for recorded votes on each one. The amendments were rejected as lawmakers listened quietly to the fiery debate in the usually raucous chamber.

Rep. Jim Watson, R-Jacksonville, blasted Cassidy, Feigenholtz and Jakobsson for hypocrisy.

“Now you know how it feels when some of our bills get sent to certain areas. What I expect the next time a bill gets sent to a committee that has no being there, as I expect you to stand up on the floor and voice your dissent,” Watson said. “You allow the process to get slighted and cheated one time -- guess what happens? It comes back and bites you in the rear.”

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