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**FLORIDA HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS MEMBERS
DEMAND WITHDRAWAL OF OBJECTIONABLE 11TH HOUR PLOY
TO HARM A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. --- Florida House Democratic Caucus members voted today to stand against an 11th hour legislative ploy by Republican leaders to add highly objectionable abortion restrictions that would greatly impair a woman's right to choose.

Members of the Florida House Democratic Caucus members are standing against allowing bills to be expedited to the House floor until there are assurances that the objectionable language -- not previously heard in House committees -- is removed from House Bill 1143.

Florida House Democratic Caucus members have said that they not only object to the language that has been added to House Bill 1143, but they are also opposed to taking up such a large health policy issue without it having been vetted through the normal health care committee process.

The following are several key points about the currently proposed House Bill 1143 that Florida House Democratic Caucus members find objectionable:

1. The bill now requires a woman to view a live ultrasound and have it explained to her before an abortion even if she is the victim of rape or sexual abuse unless she brings the police or court papers proving her victim status and presents the material to a physician.
2. The bill goes beyond the federal “Stupak agreement” to prohibit the coverage of abortion even if private funds are used when a business or group gets a tax credit for providing the health insurance. Currently, and increasingly, most women get health insurance from employers who receive tax credits for providing the insurance, so this could, effectively, end coverage for women in Florida.
3. Both the ultrasound requirement and the prohibition on using state funds (including tax credits) make exceptions for the mother’s life only, not for situations where termination of a pregnancy might be medically necessary.
4. House Bill 1143 contains language that supports Attorney General Bill McCollum’s frivolous lawsuit against the federal government alleging national health care reforms are unconstitutional. The legislation also contains language declaring that the public policy of the state is that no federal state or local government can require a person to purchase health care, though there are exceptions for workers’ compensation and other policies.

Under House rules, after the 58th day of session, the House may consider only Senate messages, conference reports and concurrent resolutions without a waiver of the rules. Additionally, Senate bills cannot be read a second or third time without a waiver of the rules after the 58th day of session.

Although Republicans hold a 76-44 majority in the Florida House, House Democratic Caucus members relied on the above-stated rules this morning to block all bills requiring a waiver of the rules from being heard.

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