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Fla. governor and his abortion bill veto

by Dennis Coday

NCR Today

Judy Gross, an NCR contributor from Florida sends this report:

Florida Governor Charlie Crist Vetoes Abortion Bill

By Judy Gross

Florida's Governor Charlie Crist is walking a tightrope. Earlier this year, he got rid of his safety net by eschewing the Republican Party to run for the U.S. Senate as an independent. Then Friday, he enraged the anti-abortion crowd by vetoing a bill that would have required a woman wanting a first trimester abortion to pay for and watch an ultrasound image of their fetus.

Pro-life legislators held the bill up for some time to give time to supporters to call and e-mail the governor urging him to sign the legislation. About 40,000 did. Rallies on the statehouse, the Florida Catholic Conference alerts, Catholic pulpit announcements and bulletin inserts had little effect on passage of the bill, a dicey political move for the popular governor.

One of the major objections Crist had to the otherwise innocuous health bill was the last minute amendment mandating the ultrasound that was added to the proposed legislation without a committee hearing. Most legislation is vetted through committees and full legislative debate. Based on this move by politicians wanting to galvanize conservatives and anti-abortionists, HB 1143 slid past the usual procedure, putting additional pressure on Crist.

Explaining his reason for veto, the governor said the bill "places an inappropriate burden on women seeking to terminate a pregnancy. Individuals hold strong personal views on the issue of life, as do I. However, personal views should not result in laws that unwisely expand the role of government and

coerce people to obtain medical tests or procedures that are not medically necessary. In this case, such action would violate a woman's right to privacy."

The Florida Times-Union calls Crist's action political land mine

According to USA Today, just before Crist vetoed the abortion bill, he had a slight lead in the three way senate race.

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