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**MICHELLE MALKIN**

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# Ultrasound as abortion block

**M**y daughter turned 6 months old last week. Veronica loves to roll across the living room, and drink from her sippy cup, and splash in the bathtub, and laugh at Daddy's fish lip faces, and yank really, really hard on Mommy's hair. She kicks and squeals and wails and gurgles and bounces and greets us each morning with a smile that could melt Antarctica.

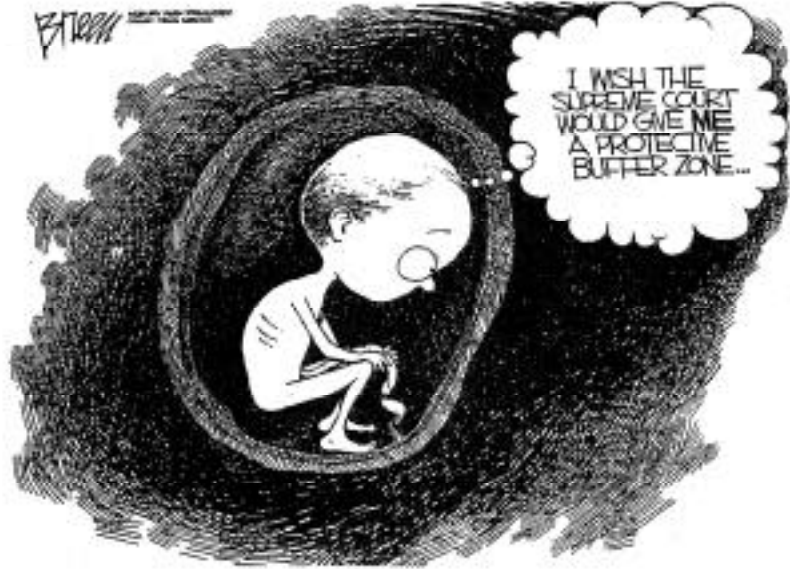
Looking back at photographs from the past half-year, we are astounded at how fast she has grown. First week home, first nap in her crib, first Halloween, first solid food, first Christmas — the Kodak moments seem to multiply exponentially.

But perhaps the most priceless pictures we will ever have of our firstborn child are the ones that were taken before she was born: black-and-white sonograms with close-ups of tiny knees and elbows, two curled feet, a waving hand, and a beating heart.

For almost three decades, ultrasound technology has provided parents with a miraculous window to the womb. This common diagnostic technique uses harmless sound waves, sent by a handheld transducer rubbed over the mother's belly, which bounce off the developing unborn child. Echoes from the waves are converted into sonograms, which can be seen on video and captured in print. The latest advances produce amazing three-dimensional views.

Ultrasound is an innovation that not only affirms life, but also saves lives. Those who believe in protecting the unborn can do more good, more immediately by helping to spread this technology across the country than by counting on fair-weather politicians in Washington.

Crisis pregnancy centers, armed with ultrasound machines donated by the non-profit National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, have convinced an untold number of parents to say no to abortion. NIFLA's "Life Choice Project" empowers the centers with legal advice, technical support, and all the equipment and training necessary to be converted into medical centers that can perform ultrasounds,



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Anecdotal evidence of ultrasound's persuasive powers has been steadily accumulating since 1983, when two government researchers published an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on pregnant women who underwent ultrasound tests while considering abortions.

Viewing their unborn children early in pregnancy, before movement is felt by the mothers, may "influence the resolution of any ambivalence toward the pregnancy itself in favor of the fetus," wrote Drs. John C. Fletcher, then of the National Institutes of Health, and Mark I. Evans, then of George Washington University Medical School. "Ultrasound examination may thus result in fewer abortions and more desired pregnancies."

Drs. Fletcher and Evans wrote that one woman who had been beaten early in pregnancy was given the test to see whether her child had been injured in the womb. When she saw the image of her child moving on the screen, she said: "I feel

that it is human. It belongs to me. I couldn't have an abortion now." Another woman, 10 weeks pregnant, said after her ultrasound exam: "I am going all the way with the baby."

Pregnancy centers from Joplin, Mo., to Denver, Colo., report that many women and their partners leaning toward abortion change their minds after ultrasound exams. Dorothy Wallis of the Care Pregnancy Clinic in Baton Rouge, La., reports that 98 percent of women who have ultrasounds choose to carry to term.

NIFLA President Thomas Glessner told me before the holidays that his group's goal is to equip one-third of the nation's pregnancy centers with ultrasound machines and trained staff. Imagine someday being able to prevent as many abortions as occur in this country — an estimated 1.5 million per year. "I believe it can happen," he said. But not without help. The program costs tens of thousands of dollars per center.

If you are a parent or grandparent who has been moved to tears of joy by ultrasound — I know you are out there and I know you are legion — make it a New Year's resolution to join this life-saving crusade.

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*Michelle Malkin is a nationally syndicated columnist.*