

# Roanoke Senator John Edwards Responds to Abortion Bills

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**RICHMOND, Va.**--Senate Bill 484, one of two controversial anti-abortion bills, has been stricken from the Virginia Senate's calendar at the request of its chief patron, Senator Jill H. Vogel, R-Fauquier County. Virginia's General Assembly has drawn national attention over the past two weeks as lawmakers debated bills that would require women seeking abortions to undergo invasive ultrasound procedures.

Earlier this week, Gov. Bob McDonnell requested that the bills be changed, removing the requirement for a trans-vaginal ultrasound, which opponents of the bills believe to be too invasive. Opponents cited laws against object sexual penetration and some have compared the proposed measures to rape. An identical bill in the House of Delegates, HB 462 is still alive for the moment and will be up for discussion in the Senate next week.

When reached for comment after regular session on Friday, Senator John Edwards, D-Roanoke, said he was pleased with the developments in the Senate, and delighted with Vogel's decision to retract the legislation, saying "she finally saw reason and decided she could no longer support her own bill."

"These are very extreme bills," said Edwards, referring to both SB 484 and HB 462. "Both bills are patently unconstitutional and not rational."

Edwards said that he had been hearing from members of his constituency about the issue. "People are outraged that there would even be such a bill," said Edwards. He also mentioned having received letters from doctors and other medical professionals saying the procedures the bill would impose on women are "medically unnecessary, expensive and intrusive".

"Reasonable people can differ in their opinions and beliefs," said Edwards, "But we should respect the privacy of the individual."

A third controversial bill, HB 1, which would grant personhood to a fetus at the moment of conception, was also defeated for this legislative session. The bill was sent back to committee to be reconsidered in 2013.