

## Virginia bill aimed to regulate genetic counselors, but could keep them from doing their jobs

In January, two legislators in Virginia's House of Delegates introduced a bill that should have been uncontroversial. The bulk of HB 612 created new rules for genetic counselors practicing in the state, who had been unregulated and unlicensed. The roughly 95 genetic counselors already working in the state, screening pregnant women and adults for serious inheritable conditions, favored the law, which they saw as an extra layer of patient protection. The bill was so innocuous that by the time it passed in the House in late February, no one seemed to have noticed that it contained a conscience clause so sweeping that could allow counselors to refuse to provide fetal test results for conditions like Down Syndrome or Tay-Sachs Disease—the information patients came to them for in the first place—if they believed it could cause a woman to terminate her pregnancy.

**Read the full, original story: [Fetal Abnormalities: The Next Minefield in the Abortion Wars?](#)**