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House passes two of Perry's 'emergency' items

By Nolan Hicks
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AUSTIN — The Texas House sent another piece of Gov. Rick Perry's legislative agenda to his desk for signature late Thursday, a sign that the Legislature is beginning to rev up as Sine Die looms.

The House's final passage of the controversial sonogram bill was applauded by conservatives.

“Ensuring Texans have access to all the information when making such an important decision is a critical step in our efforts to protect life, and I look forward to this legislation reaching my desk very soon,” said Gov. Rick Perry, just after the Senate finally passed the sonogram bill on Tuesday.

Civil liberties groups slammed final house passage of the

sonogram bill.

“Many of the elected officials who voted for this ran on promises to get government out of our lives,” said Terri Burke, the executive director of the ACLU in Texas. “They're all about getting government off our backs, but don't mind putting the government into our wombs.”

Reaction was much more muted to the House's final passage of the eminent domain reform, which garnered significant bipartisan support. It also was given emergency status by the governor, putting it on the Legislative fast track.

“It bans taking (land) that are not for public use and improves compensation for landowners,” Texas Public Policy Foundation spokesman Bill Peacock said in a statement about the passage of eminent domain reform. “We look forward to moving the debate next session to protecting landowners from harmful regulations that reduce their property value without compensation.”

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