

POLITICO

Abortion groups tangle over Tebow

By: **Andy Barr**

January 26, 2010 08:07 PM EST

A Super Bowl ad from the socially conservative Focus on the Family featuring former Florida Gators football star Tim Tebow has created a scuffle between abortion rights groups.

The Heisman Trophy winning quarterback — one of the most celebrated college football players of all time — has cut an ad with his mother Pam, who tells of her decision not to end her 1987 pregnancy in spite of advice from doctors to do so. Pam Tebow and her husband were working as missionaries in the Philippines at the time when doctors there advised her to have an abortion due to health concerns. She did not, and Tim Tebow was born.

The ad will debut during the Super Bowl, prompting protests from numerous women's groups and organizations supporting abortion that say the ad violates CBS's longstanding tradition of not airing controversial ads during sports events.

"The abortion debate has no place in the Super Bowl. I organize abortion rights rallies all the time and I recognize how inappropriate it would be for me to sit in the stands with signs at the Super Bowl," said Erin Matson, vice president of the National Organization for Women, which has called on CBS to reject the ad.

Jehmu Greene, president of the Women's Media Center, sent a letter to CBS on Monday urging the network to not air the ad that she says "uses sports to divide rather than to unite has no place in the biggest national sporting event of the year."

CBS has approved the script of the Super Bowl ad and defended its decision in a statement.

"Our standards and practices process continues to adhere to a policy that ensures all ads on all sides of an issue are appropriate for air," the statement read.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, defended CBS's decision during an interview with POLITICO.

The head of the group opposing abortion rights said that "Women can be trusted with information and they certainly don't need to be protected from the idea that if they have a crisis pregnancy that they can choose life."

"What are they protecting people from?" she asked. "It is just so counter to the whole mission which is to provide women choices. This is just the one choice they can't abide."

Tebow recently spoke out during a press conference ahead of last week's Senior Bowl, a postseason all star game for college players hoping to show off their talents to pro coaches.

"Some people won't agree with it, you know, but I think they can at least respect that I stand up for what I believe," Tebow said. "I'm just standing for something. That's the reason why I'm here because my mom is a very courageous woman."

© 2010 Capitol News Company, LLC

