



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, February 9, 2009

Contact: Michelle Trupiano – 573.424.8717 (cell)

## NEW BILLS FILED

### Restrictive and harmful:

Rep. Belinda Harris (D-Hillsboro) filed **HB570**—State Reporting of Private Information. This bill would require abortion providers to report to the state the reasons why women seek abortions if they disclose them. Despite years of documented information that a major reason is contraceptive failure or lack of access to birth control, Rep. Harris and the anti-abortion lobby continue to oppose increased access to preventive services. And, freshman Rep. Andrew Koenig (R-Winchester) filed **HB533**—Pharmacy Denial. This is the same bill filed by Rep. Emery, HB226 that protects pharmacies that refuse to dispense legal medications, and that deliberately confounds the definitions of contraception and abortion.

### Pro-active and health promoting:

Fortunately, Rep. Mike Talbot (D-Kansas City) has filed **HB584**—Patient Protection—that protects patients from those pharmacists who refuse to dispense legal medications, including over-the-counter, time-sensitive medication such as Plan B emergency contraception. Sen. Jeff Smith (D-St. Louis) has filed **SB316**—The Healthy Teens Act—that would repeal the restrictions on sex educators and information allowed in public schools. Local choice of curriculum and educators would continue and parents could still review the curriculum in advance and be able to opt their children out of the classes.

And, following an exciting and productive Prevention First Day of Advocacy, Sen. Joan Bray—together with Senators Days, Justus, Shoemyer, Smith, and Wright Jones—filed **SB329** the **2009 Missouri Prevention Act**; the companion in the House continues to gather co-sponsors. Unlike the anti-abortion bills and resolutions filed this year, this bill includes programs and policies that can actually, safely reduce the numbers of abortion in Missouri:

- Comprehensive, abstinence-based sex education
- Compassionate assistance for rape emergencies
- Birth control protection
- Family planning services for low-income women
- Patient protection at pharmacies
- Expedited partner STI therapy

## ANTI-FOCA RESOLUTIONS HEARD IN HOUSE COMMITTEE

**HR212 (Davis, R-O'Fallon)** and **HR294 (Dixon, R-Springfield)** were heard in Children and Families Committee for more than two hours on Wednesday. The resolutions, ultimately combined and approved 6 to 4, are non-binding, time-wasting platforms for the usual anti-abortion/anti-family planning rhetoric.

When asked directly by members of the committee to point to where, exactly, the federal Freedom of Choice Act (still not introduced in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress) says that all state laws regarding abortion will be repealed, neither the sponsors, nor the dozen witnesses were able to provide an answer. Interestingly, the Chair and sponsor of HB212—Rep. Cynthia Davis—introduced five Libertarians to testify in support of the resolutions. Rep. McNeil asked Bruce Sumners of the Ron Paul Group how many federal laws should be struck down because of the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment (a key argument in HR212) and he noted “about 95% of them.”

In addition to Sumners, testifying for the resolutions were: Kerry Messer (MO Family Network, MO Baptist Convention), Katherine Bleish (Liberty Restoration Project), Brent Staffer and Josh Carter (Campaign Liberty), Robert Dolman (MO Republican Liberty Caucus), Joe Ortwerth (Focus on the Family), Susan Klein (RTL), Sam Lee (Campaign Life MO), Larry Webber (MO Catholic Conference), Bev Austin (MO Roundtable for Life) and Belinda Freed (Concerned Woman of America).

And, when asked about what they are doing to help young women prevent unintended pregnancies, Messer stated: “it’s very hard to find ‘at-risk’ teens; you can’t just grab young ladies off the street...”

## **PRO-LIFE LETTER DOESN'T TELL WHOLE STORY**

Pam Fichter's Jan. 22 letter made an ardent and compelling case for the values she holds dear, including the preservation of life which she believes begins at conception. One might presume, then, those values might also compel her to value honesty and the truth. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

She claims there is a December Harris poll that demonstrates strong public opposition to abortion. False. The "Harris Poll" was actually an online poll created and financed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as the USCCB announced in a Dec. 30 press release. This just proves that push-polling by a staunchly pro-life organization works, not that America opposes abortion. To the contrary, a 2008 Gallup poll indicates that 50 percent of Americans consider themselves "pro-choice" over 44 percent who are "pro-life."

The laundry list of policy changes she presented was almost completely concocted. Existing federal restrictions, like the conscience clause for opposed hospitals, remain intact in the Freedom of Choice Act. But, please, don't take my word for it -- **I encourage everyone to read the bill** (including Mrs. Fichter). Warnings of "anti-life forces" and the imposition of an "abortion regime" are simply scare tactics. Support or opposition to abortion and women's choice is a legitimate difference of values and worthy of public debate. The embrace or rejection of truth, on the other hand, is not.

**Nick Ramsey Springfield, Springfield News Leader, 2.01.09**

## **FOR THOSE THAT WOULD 'READ THE BILL'—FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT, AS INTRODUCED IN 2007**

The bill, as last introduced, contains 15 "findings", 7 of which are listed below, along with the substantive section 4. For the full (but short) bill, please go to: <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110-s1173/text>

### **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.** [excerpts]

- (1) The United States was founded on core principles, such as liberty, personal privacy, and equality, which ensure that individuals are free to make their most intimate decisions without governmental interference and discrimination.
- (2) One of the most private and difficult decisions an individual makes is whether to begin, prevent, continue, or terminate a pregnancy[...]
- (4) The Roe v. Wade decision carefully balances the rights of women to make important reproductive decisions with the State's interest in potential life. Under Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, the right to privacy protects a woman's decision to choose to terminate her pregnancy prior to fetal viability, with the State permitted to ban abortion after fetal viability except when necessary to protect a woman's life or health.
- (6) In countries in which abortion remains illegal, the risk of maternal mortality is high. According to the World Health Organization, of the approximately 600,000 pregnancy-related deaths occurring annually around the world, 80,000 are associated with unsafe abortions.
- (7) The Roe v. Wade decision also expanded the opportunities for women to participate equally in society. In 1992, in Planned Parenthood v. Casey (505 U.S. 833), the Supreme Court observed that, "[t]he ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives.'
- (10) Legal and practical barriers to the full range of reproductive services endanger women's health and lives. [...] Currently, 87 percent of the counties in the United States have no abortion provider.
- (11) While abortion should remain safe and legal, women should also have more meaningful access to family planning services that prevent unintended pregnancies, thereby reducing the need for abortion.

### **SEC. 4. INTERFERENCE WITH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROHIBITED.**

- (a) Statement of Policy- It is the policy of the United States that every woman has the fundamental right to choose to bear a child, to terminate a pregnancy prior to fetal viability, or to terminate a pregnancy after fetal viability when necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.
- (b) Prohibition of Interference- A government may not--
  - (1) deny or interfere with a woman's right to choose--
    - (A) to bear a child;
    - (B) to terminate a pregnancy prior to viability; or
    - (C) to terminate a pregnancy after viability where termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman; or
  - (2) discriminate against the exercise of the rights set forth in paragraph (1) in the regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services, or information.
- (c) Civil Action- An individual aggrieved by a violation of this section may obtain appropriate relief (including relief against a government) in a civil action.