



Monday *MONITOR*

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PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER REPEALING GLOBAL GAG RULE!

On Friday afternoon, President Barack Obama signed an executive order ending the ban on Federal funds for international family planning providers that also perform abortions or provide information on the option *with their own funds*. In some parts of Africa, women have a one-in-10 risk of dying in childbirth, a sad fact only exacerbated by the gag rule. Making this basic healthcare available once more will save women's lives.

TWO NEW PRO-ACTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH BILLS FILED

Representative Talibdin El-Amin (D-St. Louis) filed **HB339**, the Stop HIV/AIDS in Prison Act of 2009, and **HB342**, the Prostate Research, Imaging, and Men's Education (PRIME) Act. HB339 directs the Department of Corrections to develop a comprehensive policy to provide HIV testing, treatment, and prevention for inmates within the state correctional setting and upon reentry into the community. The PRIME Act would encourage research into advanced imaging technologies to help detect prostate cancer early, much like mammography has done for breast cancer. It would also increase education and awareness around the need for prostate cancer screening to assist in early detection and treatment.

ANTI-FOCA RESOLUTIONS FILED IN HOUSE AND SENATE

Senator Matt Bartle (R-Lee's Summit) and **Representative Cynthia Davis** (R-O'Fallon) filed resolutions (**HR212** and **SCR11**) to 'express' to Congress "the General Assembly's opposition to the Federal Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA). FOCA, first introduced in 1989, has received bi-partisan support in both chambers of Congress. FOCA would codify and protect a woman's right to choose by securing women's access to reproductive health care services under Federal law. In light of recent state-level attempts to ban abortion outright—even in instances where the life of the woman is endangered—this would provide a critical protection for women. Rather than wasting valuable time during session 'sending a message' to Congress, Planned Parenthood would urge our elected officials to hear, debate, and pass the 2009 Prevention First Act that seeks to safely reduce abortions through prevention of unintended pregnancies.

LOOK FOR THE PRO-PREVENTION PRESENCE ON FEBRUARY 3

Pro-choice, pro-prevention Planned Parenthood supporters from Columbia, Kansas City, Springfield, Kirksville, Rolla, and St. Louis will meet in Jefferson City on Tuesday, February 3rd to deliver prevention petitions and to urge the legislature to support policies that increase access to birth control, sex education and family planning services. Please welcome them and engage with us in this common sense dialogue.

CALL FOR CO-SPONSORS OF THE 2009 MISSOURI PREVENTION FIRST ACT

Senator Joan Bray (D-St. Louis) and **Representative Beth Low** (D-Kansas City) are sponsoring companion versions of the **2009 Missouri Prevention First Act**. Last year, 14 restrictive bills were filed; most got at least a hearing if not also floor debate time while the Prevention First Act—promoting education and services that are proven to reduce unintended pregnancy and thus the number of abortions—never got a hearing. Please co-sponsor this important piece of legislation and help move it through both chambers.

ROE V. WADE 36TH ANNIVERSARY: HONORING CHAMPIONS & CELEBRATING CHOICE

Last week, choice supporters across the state celebrated the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade at events that were both upbeat and hopeful for the future, but also tempered by the realities of the challenges our issues face here in Missouri. In St. Louis, both outgoing and incoming pro-choice elected officials were recognized and thanked; in Springfield, Rep. Sara Lampe was presented an award; and, in Columbia, supporters joined to view the movie "Vera Drake" and discuss its implications.

CECILE RICHARDS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH, ABORTION IN THE OBAMA ERA

nationaljournal.com, January 22, 2009, Jennifer Skalka interview with PPFPA President Cecile Richards

JS: The Bush era has been friendly to the anti-abortion community [...] The choice community is looking to undo many of Bush's initiatives restricting access to abortions. So, what are the priorities for Planned Parenthood and like-minded groups for the earlier months of Barack Obama's first term?

CR: Planned Parenthood is first and foremost a health care provider. Each year, Planned Parenthood provides approximately five million women, men and adolescents with health care and education services worldwide. And with many Americans seeking affordable health care services, the eight years of the Bush administration have been devastating. With President Obama, we have a president who will work to ensure that women's health is a priority and that women have access to comprehensive and affordable health care services. We look forward to working with President Obama on three critical women's health priorities:

First, we need commonsense policies that reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and teen pregnancies. We can do this by expanding family planning programs, restoring affordable birth control for college health clinics and low-income clinics, and investing in age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education and rejecting dangerous, ineffective abstinence-only programs.

Second, we must expand access to affordable family planning and prevention care, both domestically and internationally. That means increasing funding for Title X, the nation's family planning program; investing in cost-effective preventive health care, such as breast cancer screenings and Pap tests; reversing the global gag rule and restoring funding for the UN Population Fund, which both provide valuable family planning work internationally; and overturning Bush's midnight HHS regulation that would limit the rights of patients to receive complete and accurate health care information.

Third, we need to make sure that everyone has access to affordable, quality health care, especially women. Women are adversely affected by the soaring costs of health care. According to studies, women of childbearing age spend 68 percent more in out-of-pocket health care costs than men, in part because of reproductive health-related supplies and services. Planned Parenthood is also increasingly seeing more and more women who have no health insurance and can't afford it.

JS: Obama has said that he would sign FOCA as one of his first acts in office [...] Can the President afford to tackle policy matters related to abortion, long a divisive social issue, early in his administration?

CR: President Obama understands that the time has come to bring people together around commonsense solutions to reduce unintended pregnancies. The vast majority of Americans want government to focus on solving problems, such as increasing access to affordable health care, investing in prevention care, and helping children stay healthy and safe and not become parents before they are ready. Planned Parenthood will work with the President to address the immediate problems that women are facing: access to affordable health care, reducing unintended and teen pregnancy, and investing in preventive health care. The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) would codify and protect a women's right to choose by securing women's access to reproductive health care services under federal law. It is one item on a long list of priorities that the Obama administration will have to tackle to reverse the damage of the past eight years.

JS: What's your advice for Obama about how he should shape his health care proposal [...]?

CR: Investing in preventive health services such as Pap smears, family planning and breast exams not only saves lives, it's a smart economic investment, particularly during these difficult economic times. President Obama understands this and we believe his health care proposal will put women's health care needs first. First, this means increasing access to high-quality, affordable care. The President has also said that any comprehensive health care plan should cover contraception to reduce unintended pregnancies. Contraception is basic health care: 98 percent of women use birth control at some point in their life, and 27 states require insurance companies that cover prescription drugs to cover the full-range of FDA-approved contraceptives. Plan B, which is also contraception, should also be covered. Planned Parenthood is also holding Women's Health Matters Conversations across the country, engaging our supporters and taking part in the grassroots effort to reform our nation's health care system and build support for a comprehensive health care plan.

JS: Is there room for abstinence education in our schools' comprehensive sex education programs?

CR: Yes. Abstinence education already is a part of comprehensive sex education. All credible studies, including one funded by Congress have shown that abstinence-only programs don't work, and don't delay when teens have sex. In our society, teens need honest and accurate information so they can make responsible decisions. As the mother of two teenagers, I know it can be difficult to talk with your kids about sex. We need education programs in our schools that will keep teens healthy -- by including information about abstinence as well as contraception, healthy communication, responsible decision making, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections. It's time to put money toward real solutions that will help prevent sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies.