



Monday *MONITOR*

Wednesday, January 9, 2008

WELCOME BACK: THIS IS A CRITICAL YEAR FOR CHOICE

In this election year, we anticipate even more bills and amendments proposed to score political points or make ideological statements, rather than to protect or promote the health of women, teens and families. So far, six bills have been pre-filed that are cause for serious concern:

HB1316—Davis (R-19): Parental Consent for Birth Control

HB1339—Muschany (R-87): Discrimination Against Abortion Providers

HB1472—Cunningham (R-86)/**HB1520**—Hodges (R-161): State Intrusion in Doctor/Patient Decisions

SB766—Goodman (R-29)/ **HB1530**—Smith (R-14): Prison Time for Pregnant Addicts and Alcoholics

BLUNT'S ABORTION BAN TASK FORCE

Governor Blunt, who has been at odds with the main anti-abortion/anti family planning groups over the issue of stem cell research, has been trying to develop an alternative 'base' in the anti-choice community employing John McCastle (an abortion/birth control opponent from Springfield, MO) as his key ally. In the fall, Governor Blunt—without publicity—convened a Task Force on the Impact of Abortion and charged it with recommending legislation for the 2008 session. The Task Force began its work, according to Blunt, "with the presumption that abortion [is] harmful to society." Hatched in secrecy, stacked with 14 solidly anti-abortion activists (including only one doctor and *zero medical or academic researchers*), starting with a political conclusion, and given the imprimatur of the anti-choice Governor, this Task Force is unlikely to produce "truthful, honest information" as was promised by Mr. McCastle. In 2006, a similar task force in South Dakota launched abortion ban legislation that South Dakota voters ultimately revoked. Watch for a state-sanctioned report and legislative proposals.

ILLINOIS GROUP FILES ABORTION BAN BALLOT INITIATIVE IN MISSOURI

David Reardon—whose website boasts 'A Superior Way to Ban Abortions,' and who 'earned' his doctorate from an unaccredited online diploma store—filed statutory language for the November 2008 ballot that would ban virtually all abortions except in cases of imminent death or severe medical risk. Even in those cases, the woman may still have to wait 48 hours and be evaluated on 'situational and demographic factors' before receiving the life-saving procedure. The ballot title is currently being challenged in court. For more on Reardon, go to: http://rcrc.org/issues/MedRt_Reardon.cfm.

ROE V. WADE 35TH ANNIVERSARY LAUNCHES A CRITICAL YEAR FOR CHOICE

Rolla: Wednesday, January 16, 7:00pm, Rolla Public Library. View **Voices of Choice**, a documentary about physicians who provided safe abortions prior to Roe. Contact: Lisa at 573.364.1509 or trpp@fidnet.com

St. Louis: Tuesday, January 22, 6:00—9:00pm, Third Degree Glass Factory, 5200 Delmar. **Fired Up For Choice!** Veteran poet **Shirley Bradley Leflore**; fire jugglers; choice cheerleaders; postcard contest; refreshments; cash bar. Contact Angie at 314.531.7526 ext 334 or angie.postal@pplsr.org

Springfield: Tuesday, January 22, 7:00pm at Millie's turn-of-the-century café, 313 S Jefferson. **Celebrations of Women, Freedom and Choice** will be presented by a collaborative theater group. Appetizers served; cash bar. Contact Kellie at 417.883.5899 or kellie.rohrbaugh@pprm.org

Columbia: Conclude a week of activities on Friday, January 25, 6:00—9:00pm, The Blue Note, 17 N 9th Street. Mingle with food and friends, listen to local bands, and **Stand Up for Choice!** Contact: Kristen at 573.443.0427 ext 241 or Kristen.walle@ppkm.org

Kansas City: Tuesday, January 29, 6:00—9:00pm at Unity Temple on the Plaza. **Chili For Choice**—a night of spoken word poetry, music and chili. Contact Victoria at 913-312-5100 ext 257 or victoria.pickering@ppkm.org

NEW MEXICO REJECTS TITLE V AB-ONLY FUNDS

In late December, New Mexico became **the fifteenth state** to say no to Title V abstinence-only funding. This rejection comes after the CDC's revelation that teen birth rates are rising for the first time in years and a Mathematica study that revealed that teens in abstinence-only programs were no more likely to abstain or delay sex than those teens in comprehensive programs or who didn't receive any sex education at all. The Washington Post reports that more than \$17 million in Title V funds million have been rejected.

US TEEN BIRTH RATE RISES FOR FIRST TIME IN 14 YEARS

The teen birth rate in the United States rose in 2006 for the first time since 1991, according to preliminary birth statistics released December 5th by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The statistics are featured in a new report, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2006," prepared by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, and are based on data from over 99 percent of all births for the United States in 2006 (www.cdc.gov/nchs). The report shows that between 2005 and 2006, the birth rate for teenagers aged 15-19 rose 3 percent, from 40.5 live births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 2005 to 41.9 births per 1,000 in 2006. This follows a 14-year downward trend in which the teen birth rate fell by 34 percent from its all-time peak of 61.8 births per 1,000 in 1991. In Missouri, the percentage of live births to females under 20 rose from 11.1 in 2005 to 11.4 in 2006 – a full percentage point above the national percentage; only 17 states posted higher numbers. The number of live births to females ages 15-19 in Missouri increased by 6.7% between 2005 and 2006.

JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING MONTH

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease. The best ways to prevent cervical cancer are regular screenings, consistent and correct condom use, and the HPV vaccine.

- Regular screenings are the best way to identify precancerous cells and treat them before they become cancer
- Consistent and correct condom use significantly reduces, but does not eliminate, the risk of cervical cancer. HPV can exist on areas that are not protected by a condom, so it is important to get regular checkups with a health care provider.
- The HPV vaccine represents a new front in the struggle to end cervical cancer.
- Two types of HPV cause 70 percent of cases of cervical cancer. The best way to protect our daughters from cervical cancer is to make sure they get vaccinated before they are at risk of infection, in addition to routine cervical cancer screening.

Last year, an estimated 11,150 cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed in the United States and about 4,000 American women died of the disease. Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among women. Planned Parenthood is a leader in cervical cancer prevention, working to make sure the HPV vaccine becomes an affordable, routine part of health care.

NOTE: Last spring, for purely political gain, Governor Blunt terminated 19-year state contracts with Planned Parenthood clinics in Springfield and Joplin for breast and cervical cancer screening services. His stated reason was that "Planned Parenthood supports abortion"—even though these clinics provide no abortion care.

STATE POLLING RECONFIRMS MISSOURIANS EXPECT POLITICIANS TO SUPPORT PREVENTION

Findings from a Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., statewide poll conducted in early September 2007 of 1007 registered voters reveal that Missourians are dissatisfied with the current direction of reproductive health policy in the state and that this frustration is strongly tied to the need for more education and greater resources about reproductive health decisions, rather than about the availability of abortion. Further, a majority of Missouri voters want to see Roe versus Wade upheld and show no consensus or momentum behind placing additional restrictions on abortion. In fact, voters overwhelmingly favor an approach that emphasizes "prevention first" instead of placing additional restrictions on abortion. In addition, voters strongly support a wide range of proactive policy initiatives led by near-universal support for comprehensive sex education in public schools, but also including issues such as combating pharmacy refusal and restoring state funding for family planning services for uninsured women.

For a copy of the poll memo, go to www.ppmissouri.org.