



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, March 10, 2008

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## **LOBBY DAY TO PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH**

On Tuesday, just like the US Postal Service, “nor rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night” nor—as it turns out—eight to ten inches of snow, could stop activists from across the state converging on Jefferson City for the annual Lobby Day to Protect Women’s Health. While numbers were depressed by the weather, more than 150 activists met with targeted legislators to encourage them to vote FOR prevention and to AGAINST **SB1058** and **HB1831**, the Abortion Restriction Act of 2008.

## **GREAT NEWS! CERVICAL CANCER IMMUNIZATION BILL PASSED OUT OF SENATE**

**SS/SCS/SB778** (Justus D-10) was third read and approved by a 22 to 8 vote on Thursday. The bill now heads to the House where the sponsor of the House Abortion Restriction Act of 2008 and other anti-choice legislation said he would work to defeat it. “One of the plan’s critics, Rep. Bob Onder, R-Lake St. Louis, said the vaccine only covers some strains of HPV and its long-term effects are unproven.” [*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 3/07/08]. Unfortunately, the long-term effects of cervical cancer are all too well proven: regarding cancers, it is the second biggest killer of women. The vaccine guards against two strains of HPV that cause 70% of cervical cancer cases and two strains that cause 90% of genital warts cases. The bill would require that the state mail information about the vaccine (recommended for females aged 11-21) to the parents of sixth grade girls in public schools and to pay for the vaccines if not otherwise covered. It does not mandate vaccination.

## **SB1058—ABORTION RESTRICTION ACT OF 2008—DEBATED ON SENATE FLOOR**

On Wednesday afternoon, the Senate took up SB1058 for perfection. Despite efforts by Planned Parenthood, by representatives of the domestic violence and sexual assault communities, and by other Senators to talk with the Senate sponsor about concerns that this bill will harm not protect women’s health, the original version of the bill—not even an earlier proposed House substitute—was taken up. After about an hour of debate, it was laid over.

## **HE REALLY SAID THAT?**

The Missouri Right to Life (MRL) released a 2007 legislative scorecard that has many anti-abortion/anti-family planning legislators in Jefferson City up in arms. MRL counted several votes on MOHELA and life sciences research as indirectly funding somatic nuclear cell technology (SCNT) research, using the same convoluted and misleading ‘fungibility’ logic they used to kill the state family planning program. In their scorecard they state: “This is the same stand as MRL took with family planning appropriations that funded Planned Parenthood in the 1990’s.” As a result, the 2007 MRL card scores Senators Bray, Coleman, Graham and Justus, for example, higher than most of the steadfast abortion opponents such as Senators Clemens, Crowell, Gross, Loudon, Nodler, Scott and even Senator Mayer.

After Senator Mayer introduced SB1058 for perfection on Wednesday afternoon, Senator Nodler (R-32)—who by Planned Parenthood’s ratings still has a 100% anti-choice record—took the floor to state his feelings towards Missouri Right to Life. Visibly angry, Senator Nodler vented:

- “We should be experiencing trepidation at taking up pro-life legislation this year, because the Right to Life organizations have been displaying a great deal of hostility toward pro-life legislators!”
- “These ratings are lunacy and dishonesty.”
- “The pro-life movement must be in some kind of trouble because the people that are supposed to be representing these interests have gone over to the ‘dark side’.”
- “Forget what Missouri Right to Life has to say about anything! You shouldn’t listen to anything they have to say because they LIE. They are dishonest and deceitful people.”

Missouri Right to Life similarly upset anti-choice members of the House two years ago when they told them they would count votes for comprehensive sex education as anti-choice votes.

## **Grand Jury Concludes Investigation and Clears Planned Parenthood**

*Comprehensive Health Remains Dedicated to Providing Confidential Health Care Services*

**Overland Park, KS, March 4, 2008** – Comprehensive Health of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) has been cleared of any criminal wrongdoing, this time by the citizen grand jury in Johnson County. PPKM commends the grand jury for their time and effort throughout the investigation and trusts this decision will give the people of Kansas renewed confidence in the justice system.

“We appreciate the diligence shown by the 15 citizens who devoted three months of their lives to ensuring justice,” stated Peter Brownlie, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas & Mid-Missouri. “For nearly 75 years, Planned Parenthood has been a vital resource for our community. This encouraging outcome affirms that we are a trusted source of health care and education for thousands of women and families. We hope that the Grand Jury’s fair-minded evaluation of the evidence will put an end to the politically motivated attacks on reproductive health care in Kansas.”

The grand jury was convened in December 2007, after a coalition of extremist anti-choice groups led a petition process. During a three month investigation, Planned Parenthood provided the 15-member grand jury with all the information that it sought for its investigation and did so while fully protecting patient privacy and confidentiality. “Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri has an ironclad commitment to protecting patient privacy,” stated Brownlie. The grand jury voted to end any further requests or examination into patient records, according to retired Judge Larry McClain, Special Counsel to the Grand Jury.

“The grand jury’s decision validates our contention throughout that we had nothing to fear from this investigation,” said Brownlie. “Planned Parenthood cooperated fully with this investigation and we are very pleased that the health, safety, and security of our patients remained a top priority during this process.

Unfortunately, the battle is not over for PPKM or Kansas women. Still pending are the 107 criminal charges filed by Johnson County District Attorney Phill Kline against Comprehensive Health. The next hearing on that matter is in early April.

“Instead of intimidating and harassing health care providers and their patients, hardliners who oppose abortion should link arms with the women’s health community to focus on real solutions that prevent unintended pregnancy, like affordable birth control and comprehensive sex education in schools,” Brownlie concluded.

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*PPKM’s Mission: To ensure that every individual has the knowledge, opportunity and freedom to make informed private decisions about reproductive and sexual health.*