



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, March 23, 2009

Contact: Michelle Trupiano – 573.424.8717 (cell)

## **HB 46 & 434, ABORTION RESTRICTION BILL MOVES TO SENATE**

Before leaving on spring break, the Missouri House third read and passed the Abortion Restriction bill proposed by **Reps. Cynthia Davis** (R-O'Fallon) and **Bryan Pratt** (R-Blue Springs). This marked the fourth legislative day of 39 this year the House leadership has spent prioritizing debate on abortion. And, debate was further marked by even more contentious comments from the sponsor. In an exchange with Rep. Beth Low—who is the sponsor of the 2009 Missouri Prevention First Act that includes programs proven to reduce unintended pregnancy—Rep. Davis told her since she had never been pregnant, Rep. Low knew 'diddly squat' about reproductive health issues. Given this logic, it would appear that 130 of Rep. Davis' colleagues should be automatically barred from discussing abortion-related matters just by virtue of gender.

The bill has been second read in the Senate but not yet referred to committee. A similar bill sponsored by **Sen. Rob Mayer** (R-Dexter), **SB264**, is on the Senate calendar.

## **HB226 PHARMACY DENIAL BILL PASSED OUT OF COMMITTEE**

**HB226**, sponsored by **Rep. Ed Emery** (R-Lamar) was voted 'do pass' by the House Healthcare Policy Committee. This bill, like bills filed in previous years, would protect pharmacies from recrimination if employees of the pharmacy refuse to dispense contraception. Women should have their legal prescriptions filled in-store without discrimination or delay. It also incorrectly defines emergency contraception as an abortifacient even though it was approved by the FDA as a contraceptive. **HB226** would allow a pharmacist to refuse to dispense 'RU486' – even though this medication is not available through a pharmacy, but only under direct contract between the manufacturer and the abortion provider.

## **SJR17—BAN ON LIFE SCIENCES & ABORTION FUNDING—SENT TO COMMITTEE**

**SJR17**, sponsored by **Sen. Jim Lembke** (R-Chesterfield), was sent to the Senate Committee on Seniors and Families. This resolution, part of an overall campaign plan hatched by former Blunt chief of staff, Ed Martin, continues a relentless quest to ban stem cell research and (already banned) human cloning. This year, Martin has included abortion funding as a straw man to attract wayward anti-abortion voters to the cause. A majority of voters approved stem cell research in Missouri in a 2006 ballot measure, including many anti-abortion but pro-stem cell voters.

## **HB999—2009 MISSOURI PREVENTION FIRST ACT—INTRODUCED BY REP. LOW**

Just before spring break, on the heels of the 'diddly squat' debate on abortion, Rep. Beth Low (D-Kansas City) and 44 colleagues filed the Prevention First Act. New this year to the package of prevention programs and services is the public health measure to provide expedited therapy to the partner of a woman diagnosed with Chlamydia or Gonorrhea. The other programs increase access to contraception and medically accurate, comprehensive sex education. Perhaps the House leadership could see fit to spend even one legislative day during the second half of session on prevention programs.

## **HEADS UP: WOMEN'S HEALTH/PUT PREVENTION FIRST LOBBY DAY APPROACHING**

On Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> advocates and supporters of reproductive healthcare and comprehensive sex education, will be in the Capitol to talk with elected officials about putting Missouri on the right track and making prevention a priority. Go to: [www.ppmissouri.org](http://www.ppmissouri.org) for more information.

## **STATEMENT ON RISING TEEN BIRTH RATE BY CECILE RICHARDS. PRESIDENT OF PPFA**

*Released March 18, 2009*

“With nearly 750,000 teens getting pregnant every year, the United States is facing a teen pregnancy health care crisis. When something is broken, our country works to fix it. We must work together to fix this crisis and reduce unintended pregnancies.

“[Today's news from the CDC](#) that the teen birthrate is on the rise for the second straight year clearly demonstrates that abstinence-only programs are failing our teens. We agree with President Obama that our nation must leave behind the divisive politics of the last eight years and move forward with commonsense policies that achieve our shared goal of truly preventing unintended pregnancies. That's why we believe that the time has come for everyone who cares about teenagers to start focusing on real policies that will help reduce the teen pregnancy rate. This begins with honest communication between young people and parents, comprehensive and accurate sex education, and access to affordable contraception.

“Congress should put the right foot forward and immediately stop funding for abstinence-only programs that deny young people information about how to prevent pregnancy, protect their health and make responsible decisions. In the last decade, more than \$1.5 billion has been wasted on abstinence-only programs, when studies show they don't reduce the number of teen pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections.

“As a nation, we must invest in policies and programs that will help prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among teenagers.”

## **LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX: CONGRESS LOVES ABSTINENCE-ONLY PROGRAMS SO MUCH IT HAS THROWN BIG BUCKS AT THEM. THE PUBLIC? IT'S GOT BETTER IDEAS** *[excerpted]*

*Anna Quindlen. NEWSWEEK March 16, 2009 For full article, go to: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/188136>*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that there is a deep schism in this country, a schism between those many Americans who support comprehensive sex education in the schools and an equal number who believe that only abstinence should be taught, between those who want teenagers to be told about masturbation and HIV prevention and the like, and those who believe they mostly need to hear that true love waits. It is one of those universally acknowledged truths that happen to be utterly false.

The poll results are astonishing. While respondents in some surveys are divided over whether more emphasis should be on contraception or on abstinence, nearly 90 percent of those sampled in several recent polls support the notion of sex ed in schools. I'm not sure that many people would agree about teaching long division.

But none of this is what you would hear if you put your ear to the ground in Washington, D.C. In yet another example of how things can go horribly awry within that zone of magical thinking, Congress has poured \$1.5 billion into what is essentially anti-sex ed, abstinence-only programs, despite the following facts:

- 1: They don't work. [...]
- 2: They're actually counterproductive. [...]

3: Everyone understands this. A growing number of states are turning down federal funds for abstinence-only education. Yes, that's right: states are being offered money and saying no. (I wanted to write that in capital letters but restrained myself.) Texas leads the nation in spending for abstinence-only programs. It also has one of the highest teen birthrates in the country. Those two sentences together sound like the basis for a logic question on the SAT, but a really easy one.

President Obama's budget seems to reflect the sentiment of most Americans, promising to "stress the importance of abstinence while providing medically accurate and age-appropriate information to youth who have already become sexually active." In other words, we can indeed walk and chew gum. [...]

Perhaps this issue offers an opportunity for elected-official ed, too. It's worth looking past the dueling paid faces to actual public opinion about what appear to be contentious issues—but sometimes aren't. Common sense dictates that schools should offer a comprehensive view of sexual behavior, including a guide to those measures that can help sexually active students avoid visiting an abortion clinic or experiencing burning during urination. And elected officials might try a comprehensive view, too, before they use scarce resources on programs they've embraced mainly because they do not offer the inconvenience of complexity.