



Monday *MONITOR*

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HOUSE PASSES ABORTION RESTRICTIONS OVER OBJECTIONS OF 'DUMB' MEMBERS

On Thursday, after two hours (and the second day) of contentious debate, the House perfected **HB46 & 434**, the 2009 Abortion Restriction Bill over the strenuous and impassioned opposition of legislators committed to resolving issues of violence against women. This bill, which sponsors **Rep. Cynthia Davis** (R-O'Fallon) and **Rep. Bryan Pratt** (R-Blue Springs) suggest is needed to protect women, actually makes the process of informed consent more difficult and, according to the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, puts victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse in greater danger.

Current Missouri law regulating abortion and informed consent is exhaustive and detailed (see RSMO Chapter 188); this bill adds yet additional burdens to the process, doubly victimizes abused women by rendering them unable to make decisions about their own lives, and criminalizes doctors. To "protect" women, Reps. Davis and Pratt recommend the illogical remedy of rendering them incompetent and refuse to acknowledge that their bill bans abortions for women who have survived rape or assault as defined in RSMO Chapter 565. Given the argument that Rep. Pratt made repeatedly that 'right thinking', 'smart' legislators would vote for the bill—thereby suggesting that opponents must be 'dumb', a point not well taken by **Reps. Sara Lampe** (D-Springfield) and **Mary Still** (D-Columbia)—it appears that bullying and name-calling trump debate.

Rep. Lampe was direct: "If this body really cared about coercion...then we wouldn't be talking about abortion at all, we would be talking about domestic violence...and we'd be bringing a bill to this floor that would put some measure in place that would stop it..." **Rep. Don Calloway** (D-St. Louis) chided the sponsor for playing a 'silly political game' of ruling opponents' amendments out of order. But, it was **Rep. Beth Low** (D-Kansas City), now a four-year veteran of these abortion debates that encourage pontification at the expense of debating prevention programs and services that could reduce abortions, who reminded Rep. Davis of a statement she had made at a dinner they both attended: "How dare these men presume that they can make decisions for us better than we can about our reproductive healthcare." Rep. Low described her own experiences in counseling abused women and noted that "women who have survived sexual assault still have their decision-making intact." Rep. Low is sponsoring the 2009 Prevention First Act that can prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce abortions, yet most of the members voting for this bill refuse to sign on.

To her immense credit, **Rep. Anne Zerr**, a Republican freshman from St. Charles, spoke of her own experiences of abuse as a young girl. While thankfully the abuse did not lead to pregnancy, she noted that if she could have 'gotten in a room and told someone, it would have meant the world to me.' Had Rep. Zerr visited an abortion clinic in Missouri she would have had the opportunity to tell someone during her individual counseling session. The trained counselors are required by law to report any abuse. And, while parental consent is required, parents cannot force their child to have an abortion.

The bill will likely be third read this week. It is bad public policy that will do nothing to reduce the need for abortion and deserves to be rejected.

TWO MORE BILLS FILED TO PUNISH PREGNANT WOMEN

SB459 sponsored by **Sen. Brad Lager** (R-Savannah) and **SB529** sponsored by **Sen. Jack Goodman** (R-Mt. Vernon) were filed and referred to committee (Judiciary, and General Laws, respectively). These bills would punish a pregnant woman if she goes to term before she is able to overcome her drug or alcohol problem. These bills contradict current statute (passed in 1991) that, rather than imposing criminal sanctions, requires pregnant women with drug or alcohol problems be given priority access to treatment and prenatal care to increase the chances of a healthy birth. Studies have demonstrated that, *even while continuing prenatal substance use*, obtaining prenatal care reduces the risk of premature birth and increases health outcomes. A jail cell does not.

The **Monday Monitor** has learned that treatment resources for pregnant women are likely to be severely reduced in the House leadership's proposed 2010 budget...

OBAMA PROPOSES RULE RESCINDING BUSH HHS MIDNIGHT RULE

[Excerpted from PPFA press release, 3.06.09]

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) applauds the Obama administration for proposing a rule to rescind a Bush midnight regulation that undermines the country's ailing health care system as well as patients' access to health care information and services.

"This proposed rule clearly states that the Obama administration is committed to putting patients' care and women's health first. It is a commonsense fix to a devastating midnight regulation that jeopardized patients' access to services and information," said Cecile Richards, president of PPFA. "As was made clear at the White House Summit on Health Care yesterday, we should be working together to increase, not hinder, access to care. Patients deserve access to complete and accurate health care information and services and today's action shows that this administration understands and will meet this need.

"Commenters asserted that the rule would limit access to patient care and raised concerns that individuals could be denied access to services, with effects felt disproportionately by those in rural areas or otherwise underserved. The Department believes that the comments on the August 2008 proposed rule raised a number of questions that warrant further careful consideration. It is important that the Department have the opportunity to review this regulation to ensure its consistency with current Administration policy."

The next step in the rule making process is allowing for public comment. Planned Parenthood urges supporters to comment on the rule and show their support for this new rule. The public can post their comments via www.PlannedParenthood.org

PPFA STATEMENT ON GOV. SEBELIUS' NOMINATION TO SECRETARY OF HHS

Cecile Richards, President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America

"As countless women and their families struggle to afford quality health care during these difficult economic times, **Gov. Kathleen Sebelius** is [an excellent choice](#) to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. Gov. Sebelius is a strong advocate for health care reform and has a proven track record of increasing access to affordable care. She has a strong record of supporting commonsense prevention policies that improve health outcomes. Her ability to work in a bipartisan fashion will serve her well as the Obama administration and Congress tackle the critical issue of health care reform for American families.

"We also applaud the appointment of **Nancy-Ann DeParle** to serve as director of the White House Office for Health Reform. She is one of the leading health policy experts in the country and a strong advocate for meaningful health care reform.

"We hope the Senate acts quickly to confirm Gov. Sebelius so she can get to work on addressing the needs of the American people for affordable, reliable care."

LOST YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE? CONSIDER PLANNED PARENTHOOD CLINICS

February 24, 2009 04:36 PM ET | Deborah Kotz

There is no joy in Mudville. Our house values have plummeted, and our portfolios and pensions were worth more a decade ago than they are today. A whopping 7.6 percent (and growing) of us are unemployed, while the rest of us are worried about losing our jobs. The hemorrhaging job market leaves an additional 14,000 Americans every day without health insurance [...] No surprise, many of us are now praying that our birth control doesn't fail us, and some women have consciously decided to postpone having a baby in this recession. Many of those left without insurance have been swarming into Planned Parenthood clinics to get free or subsidized contraception.

[...]There's no doubt that these family planning services, partially subsidized with your tax dollars, do a great service, especially as more of us find ourselves unable to afford basic healthcare necessities like a yearly Pap smear or monthly birth control pills. In fact, a Guttmacher Institute report released today [see next story] has calculated that publicly funded services, at both hospitals and nonprofit clinics, save taxpayers \$4 for every \$1 spent by preventing nearly 2 million pregnancies and 810,000 abortions every year. [...] What's more, the report found that 6 in 10 women who come to these centers consider it to be their usual source of medical care. "They get their annual Pap and pelvic exam, screening for sexually transmitted infections, a blood pressure check, breast exam," Gold says. "It's pretty much the same level of care that you get on your yearly gynecologist visit."

<http://www.usnews.com/blogs/on-women/2009/02/24/lost-your-health-insurance-consider-planned-parenthood-clinics.html>

GUTTMACHER REPORT DOCUMENTS BENEFITS OF PUBLICLY FUNDED FAMILY PLANNING

The Guttmacher Institute released a new report titled [Next Steps for America's Family Planning Program: Leveraging the Potential of Medicaid and Title X in an Evolving Health Care System](#).

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/NextSteps.pdf>