



Monday *MONITOR*

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PHARMACY DENIAL LANGUAGE STRIPPED FROM ARCHITECTS & CEMETERIES BILL

Language that would have allowed pharmacies to gag employees from providing information about where to obtain birth control and Plan B emergency contraception and to refuse to dispense birth control was stripped from **SB296** in conference committee. **Rep. Emery (R-Lamar)**, who had originally attached the amendment, continues to deliberately confuse Plan B emergency birth control that cannot terminate a pregnancy with RU486 abortion medication that does terminate a pregnancy. By parroting this misinformation, Emery and the anti-choice/anti-birth control advocates in Jefferson City hope to confuse moderate, prevention-oriented legislators into denying women access to this basic healthcare. Thanks go to **Sen. Day (D-St. Louis) and Sen. Smith (D-St. Louis)** for working to have it removed, as well as **Rep. Dougherty (D-Independence)**, who recognized this could possibly kill what had been a non-controversial bill.

HB46 & 434 VOTED 'DO PASS' IN SENATE FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

In a 5:2 vote on Thursday, the committee approved the House version of the Abortion Restriction Bill that contains burdensome additions to the informed consent process for women seeking abortions and tramples on the doctor/patient relationship. **HB46&434 (Davis/Pratt)** was later turned in and will be on the Senate calendar on Monday. This bill does nothing to prevent unintended pregnancies and, as the commentary on the back of this issue details, it does nothing to address a very real lack of informed consent for women who are going to term with a pregnancy. This bill is intended **ONLY** to make it harder for women to seek legal abortion and has nothing to do with women's health or safety. It should not be brought up for debate.

SENATOR'S CLOSED MIND IS A REASON FOR CONCERN

Letter to the Editor By Kristin Maun, Leawood, KS: May 02, 2009

Recently, I was fortunate enough to spend some time speaking with Missouri state Sen. Matt Bartle of Lee's Summit. I was with a few other citizens who came to speak with him about the Prevention First Bill and the Abortion Restriction Bill. I was grateful for his time and his candor, but I was disturbed by a lot of what he said. When we expressed concern that the Abortion Restriction Bill was wasting precious time and money, he told us that 95 percent of what the state legislature does is waste the taxpayer money. I was further disheartened when Senator Bartle revealed how closed minded he was and how unwilling he was to listen to voters. When we tried to talk to him about the Prevention First Bill, he told us that there must be something wrong with it if it is supported by pro-choice groups. He added that although he has not read the bill, it is too controversial to pass. I pointed out to him that he is supporting the equally controversial Abortion Restriction Bill.

It seems controversy only bothers Sen. Bartle if he personally disagrees. Never mind that 89 percent of Missouri people want comprehensive sex education. Never mind that 59 percent want legislators to focus on preventing pregnancy rather than restricting access to abortion. Never mind the Prevention First Bill provides both these things. My conversation with Sen. Bartle showed me he is not interested in the people of Missouri's opinions. He is only interested in his own agenda, even if it wastes the taxpayers' money.

BUDGET CUTS ABSTINENCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Associated Press Online; May 8, 2009

President Barack Obama wants to eliminate more than \$100 million in spending on abstinence-only education, directing the money instead to teen pregnancy-reduction programs that don't take the no-sex approach. The proposal in Obama's 2010 budget plan released Thursday could run into opposition from conservatives. Administration budget documents say Obama wants to redirect funding from "abstinence-only

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education programs to evidence-based and promising teen pregnancy prevention programs."

Obama wants to eliminate a \$38 million state grant program plus a nearly \$100 million pot of money that is supposed to be spent for abstinence education at the direction of the Administration for Children and Families, part of the Health and Human Services Department. He would create a new \$110 million "teen pregnancy prevention initiative," plus direct \$50 million to states for pregnancy prevention programs. The most positive results, Obama's budget plan asserts, come from programs that "provide a range of services in addition to comprehensive sex education, such as after school activities, academic support or service learning."

PREGNANT WOMEN OFTEN GIVEN NO CHOICE

Springfield News Leader, May 4 2009: Commentary by Ilene Ordowner, former M) state representative (1992)

The Missouri legislature is considering legislation (SB 264, HB 46 and 434) that sponsors claim will prevent women from being coerced into having unwanted abortions. But this bill seeks to protect only the interests of women who plan to end their pregnancies, which raises serious questions about the legislative commitment to the pregnant women who give birth. Missouri already requires informed consent for an abortion, but it doesn't ensure the same for full-term pregnancy procedures. While 7,000 women in Missouri have abortions each year, more than 81,000 go to term. The Missouri bills require that women be provided with "medically accurate information" about abortion. While such information is routinely provided in the abortion context, there is significant evidence that equivalent information regarding childbirth methods is often denied to women going to term.

The World Health Organization suggests that births by Caesarean, based on medical need, would not exceed 15 percent of all deliveries. Yet, today, 30 percent of all births are by Caesarean. This rise in surgery rates has not been accompanied by overall improvements in maternal or child health and creates risks that do not exist with vaginal births. A survey of women's experiences found that one-quarter of the women who had Caesareans reported that they had experienced pressure from a health professional to have the surgery. And 73 percent of the women who had an episiotomy during delivery reported that they had no choice.

Evidence-based research does not demonstrate that women seeking abortions are deprived of information or best medical practices. A highly respected report on maternity care practices, however, found that interventions during labor and childbirth that "have been shown not to be effective, or to be appropriate only in limited circumstances are in wide use." The best available evidence supports vaginal birth after Caesarean surgery (VBAC) for most women who have had a Caesarean previously. Nevertheless, 38 percent of Missouri hospitals leave women with no choice, requiring women to undergo a planned repeat surgery if they deliver in any of those facilities.

Missouri legislators want to add yet another law to the already numerous ones regulating abortion, but ignore the opportunity to pass legislation that could apply to women going to term. Instead, they should simply replace the word abortion with the following italicized words: Health care providers would be required to inform the woman that "she is free to withhold or withdraw her consent to have any medical intervention anytime without fear of losing treatment and assistance benefits." And, hospitals would have to "display statements encouraging a pregnant woman seeking a vaginal birth after a Caesarean to contact agencies that help women carry an unborn child to full term" without unnecessary medical interventions. It is time for Missouri to demonstrate a real commitment to pregnant women by ensuring that all of them, including those going to term, are guaranteed informed consent and access to medical providers trained to support a woman's choice without unnecessary and costly medical interventions.

SEBELIUS CONFIRMED, NOW DAWN JOHNSEN CONFIRMATION ON HOLD

Excerpt from 5.01.09 e-alert from Cecile Richards, President of PPFA

The good news: we finally have a strong advocate for women's health as Secretary of Health and Human Services! At the end of April, Kathleen Sebelius finally won confirmation despite constant attacks from anti-choice groups and their Senate allies. The not-so-good news: the people who opposed Secretary Sebelius are now trying to stop the confirmation of another qualified Obama nominee simply because she is pro-choice. President Obama nominated Dawn Johnsen, an Indiana University law professor with a long history of standing up for women's rights, to be assistant attorney general in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel.

Professor Johnsen has made a career of standing up for civil and women's rights, and she will be a strong voice for justice within the Obama administration. She has also been a vocal supporter of *Roe v. Wade* and has worked hard to protect every woman's right to make her own medical decisions. It is outrageous that some senators would try to keep Professor Johnsen out of government not because she is unqualified, not because she's the wrong person for the job — but because she is pro-choice. It's time for these senators to stop holding President Obama's nominees hostage to their anti-choice ideology.