



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, February 22, 2010

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## “ABORTION NIGHT” IN SENATE JUDICIARY

Despite more than 30 laws on the books in Missouri regulating abortion, so many bills are filed annually to further restrict access that the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee every year holds what he now calls “Abortion Night.” Last Monday, **SB 792 (Dempsey, R-23)** and **SCS SB 793 (Mayer, R-25)** were heard simultaneously. Senator Bartle asked the sponsors to present both bills at once, followed by witnesses for and against both bills. **SB 792**, a bill requiring abortion providers to report even more information to the state, would have providers ask the woman why she is seeking an abortion and then report that to the state. Without mandating the question be answered—which the drafter studiously avoids—the results of this invasion of privacy will clearly be unscientific. Supporters of these attempts to reduce women in crisis to a ‘checkbox’ ignore the obvious: women seek abortions because they become unintentionally pregnant at a time when they believe the most responsible decision is not to continue the pregnancy. It would seem that the information they seek—which is already published in peer-reviewed journals—could perhaps also be gleaned from the Crisis Pregnancy Centers they have established to scare women out of the procedure.

**SCS SB 793**, the **2010 Abortion Restriction** bill, once again imposes numerous new, burdensome and duplicative requirements for counseling, evaluating, and performing abortion procedures that do nothing to protect women’s health, but would make it extremely difficult for women to access and physicians to provide. The bill intrudes significantly on the doctor/patient relationship and ignores the standard practice of medical care already in place for abortion providers. In a frankly stunning moment of inappropriateness, Senator Cunningham badgered the PPMO lobbyist, going so far as to ask her if she had ever had an abortion. It is just such invasions of privacy that women fear as the government continues to intrude further into these personal and private decisions.

PPMO anticipates both bills could be voted on in committee this evening.

## HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HEARS ABORTION REPORTING AND RESTRICTION BILLS

**HB 1327 (Davis, R-19)** and **HB 2000 (Pratt, R-55)**, both **Abortion Restriction** bills, were heard Wednesday morning in Rep. Davis’ House Children and Families Committee and will likely be voted out of committee on Wednesday of this week. Both bills, which intrude unnecessarily into the doctor/patient informed consent process, also include language that would create the ‘crime of coercion of abortion’ a measure vehemently opposed by the sexual assault and domestic violence community. In addition, Rep. Pratt’s bill includes a punitive measure that providers report all abortions to teens 16 and younger to the county prosecutor regardless of whether abuse is suspected and despite the fact that Missouri already requires one parent/guardian written consent for abortions to minors AND that healthcare providers are already mandated reporters. Representative Pratt cited the much publicized Mohler case involving heinous acts of child rape and abuse to illustrate the “need” for this measure. In fact, reporting in the tragic situation he described is already required under current law which begs the question of whether Representative Pratt is addressing policy or politics with the measure.

## PRO-ACTIVE PREVENTION BILLS MOVING FORWARD

**SB 627 (Justus, D-10)**, the **Cervical Cancer Immunization** bill, was perfected in two minutes on the Senate floor Tuesday with no amendments and no opposition. It was sent to Fiscal Oversight. PPMO applauds Senator Justus for her tenacity and hopes that this is the year for final passage. On Tuesday night, **HB 1523 (Hoskins, D-80)**, the **Uterine Fibroids Information** bill, was heard in House Healthcare Transformation Committee. This public health bill would require MO-DHSS to develop and disseminate information regarding uterine fibroids to health care providers and the public. In addition, **Sen. Robin Wright Jones (D-05)** filed **SB 955**, the **Expedited Partner Therapy** bill.

## **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ADVOCATES HIT THE CAPITOL FOR LOBBY DAY**

A tenacious group of pro-choice advocates descended on Jefferson City last Tuesday to visit with targeted Representatives and Senators about co-sponsorship of the 2010 Prevention First Act and opposition to any attempt to deny women access to legal birth control by pharmacies or their employees. Advocates from Faith Aloud, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL-PCM from all corners of the state met with 31 elected officials over the course of three busy hours. Rabbi Dan Plotkin, Board Chair of Faith Aloud, was recognized on the House Floor by Representative Jeanette Mott Oxford. Advocates will be back March 16 and April 28—and in-between.

## **PPMO WELCOMES THREE NEW STATE REPRESENTATIVES**

On Tuesday, February 2, three new state Representatives won special elections to replace members who had vacated their seats. **Hope Whitehead (D-57)**, a pro-choice attorney from St. Louis City replaces former Rep. T.D. El-Amin, **Nita Jane Ayres (R-62)** replaces former Rep. Dennis Wood in the Branson area, and **Pat Conway (D-27)** replaces former Rep. Ed Wildberger in the St. Joseph area. PPMO hopes all three legislators, who were sworn in last week, will support measures that help women prevent unintended pregnancy, like the 2010 Prevention First Act.

## **LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR: "NATIONAL CONDOM WEEK BEGINS"**

***Posted: 2/16/10; The Standard, MSU; Kayla Bass, a member of VOX, Junior English***

National Condom Week, Feb. 14-21, is a time of awareness and action. As educated college students, we know that condoms are the most effective way to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, so why aren't more people using them? The CDC estimates that nearly 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur each year, almost half of which are among 15 to 24-year-olds. Have a look at some statistics from the Missouri Department of Health from January 2009 until June 2009:

- The Southwest region of Missouri reported 1,493 cases of Chlamydia.
- Total reported cases of Chlamydia in Missouri: of 12,875, 9,378 reported were female and 3,497 reported were male.
- From 2004 to 2008, there has been an increase in the number of reported Chlamydia cases in Missouri overall. Trends for 2009 have not yet been assessed.

It is very important to use condoms, even when using other methods of birth control (e.g. contraceptives). Latex, plastic and non-latex rubber condoms as well as female condoms are highly effective in preventing pregnancy, and they are the only forms of birth control that also help reduce the risk of STIs. Remember to talk with your partner about using condoms before you engage in sexual activity. Take a moment during National Condom Week to discuss with your partner the importance of using condoms.

In order to help everyone take action, VOX, Voices for Planned Parenthood at Missouri State, will be handing out free condoms and providing information about safer sex choices and sexually transmitted infections at the Plaster Student Union both Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Come by and take the steps to protect your health!

## **LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR: "CONDOMS ARE BEST FORM OF SAFE SEX"**

***February 21, 2010, Springfield News Leader, Letter-to-the-Editor; Amanda Henemyre***

Did you know that nearly 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur each year? One out of every two sexually active young people will develop an STI before the age of 25.

What most people don't realize is that prevention is very easy. National Condom Week, February 14-21, is the perfect opportunity to talk to your partner about the importance of protecting one another's sexual health. Even if you are using another method of birth control, you may still be at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Condoms are the best way to prevent unintended pregnancy and STIs and the only way to protect against STIs.

Develop a plan and practice what you will say to your partner. Don't be shy about communicating your feelings and make sure that you send a consistent message. Make sure that your partner knows that condom use is essential every single time that you have sex. A partner who respects you should also be concerned about respecting your health. Most couples actually find sex more enjoyable when they aren't worried about unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Take the steps to protect both your sexual health and your partner's sexual health. Use a condom each and every time you have sex.

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