



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, May 3, 2010

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## **ABORTION RESTRICTION BILLS MOVING**

**SB793 (Mayer, R-25), the 2010 Abortion Restriction Bill**, is scheduled for a public hearing on Tuesday, upon morning adjournment, in House General Laws Committee. The bill inserts politicians into the doctor-patient relationship, adds many new burdensome and unnecessary requirements to the informed consent process for abortion, and attempts to impose an abortion coverage ban even more extreme than the ban proposed by Representative Bart Stupak of Michigan, which was defeated in Congress this year. PPMO urges the House to reject this bill and protect the doctor-patient relationship from government interference and state-mandated ideology.

**HB2252 (Faith, R-15), Tax Credits for Crisis Pregnancy Centers**, was referred to Senate Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight. Despite the general decline in revenue, the deep cuts in the budget sent to the Governor last week, and the concerns over the unbridled growth in tax credits, this bill continues to move through the process. While tax credits are used to great effect in many areas in Missouri, it is outrageous that the legislature continues to approve public funds to agencies that lie to and mislead pregnant women in the hopes they will carry to term rather than consider an abortion. This bill should not be released from committee.

**HB1725 (Pollock, R-146), the Abortion Insurance Coverage Ban**, is on the House Perfection Calendar. This bill—more extreme than the restrictions rejected by Congress last year—would ban abortion coverage by health plans in future health exchanges (although current law already bans such coverage) and go one step further to bar riders purchased with private funds. This heartless bill should be defeated.

## **GOOD NEWS: EPT BILL ON SENATE PERFECTION CALENDAR**

**HB1375 (Cooper, R-155), the Expedited Partner Therapy bill**, is on the Senate Perfection Calendar and will, we hope, pass this year. This sound public health bill allows physicians to treat the partner of a patient diagnosed with Chlamydia or gonorrhea without an existing physician/patient relationship in order to help curb the growing rate of sexually transmitted infections. The antibiotics would be dispensed in pill form. This bill deserves swift passage.

## **ABORTION DEBATE HITS NEW LOW IN MISSOURI**

***Columbia Tribune, Letter to the Editor, April 26, 2010, Name withheld upon request***

As a pro-choice individual, I thought I had heard it all. But this past month the anti-choice discourse hit a new low. As an intern at the state Capitol, I had a front-row seat for the recent abortion debate. In the middle of usual discourse, Reps. Brian Nieves and Bryan Pratt began asserting that opposition to HB1327 and 2000, anti-abortion bills, equals support for rape. The bill's premise was based on the assumption that women are incapable of understanding what takes place during an abortion. Nothing in the bill put measures into place that would actually reduce abortions. The fact that these devastating crimes were being maliciously exploited to further their political agendas and personal ideologies left me speechless. Listening to somebody tell me that my opposition to this bill somehow means I wish to protect the men who abused me, I suddenly understood how it felt to be silenced by my government.

## **SCARING AND SHAMING: LTE—St. Louis Post Dispatch, 4.22.10, Gretchen Waddell, Ballwin**

I am outraged and disappointed in this state. State Rep. Cynthia Davis, R-O'Fallon, chairwoman of the Special Standing Committee on Children and Families, said her committee existed primarily to hear abortion bills. That is why she would not push legislation to protect children from unlicensed child care professionals being tried for serious crimes. Instead of protecting infants and children in her district, Ms. Davis spends her time in the House waging a war on women's reproductive health....

Read full LTE [here](#) (scroll down to second letter).

## **PRO-WOMAN VICTORY: GEORGIA ABORTION RESTRICTION BILL DEFEATED**

*Jodi Jacobson, Editor-in-Chief, RH Reality Check, May 1, 2010*

Yesterday, SB 529, the so-called "OB/GYN Criminalization and Racial Discrimination Act," died in the Rules Committee of the Georgia House of Representatives on the last day of Georgia's legislative session. A press release from SisterSong, SPARK and SisterLove, a coalition of three Georgia groups that led opposition to this and other bills, stated:

*After more than three days of attempting to negotiate with the ultra conservative right to life lobby, the Speaker of the House David Ralston, was unable to convince them to support a more reasonable bill. The hard-line Republicans and moderate Republicans could not unite on the bill. This allowed the Democrats to filibuster. Essentially, it was the splintering that caused the bill's turnaround in lacking unity.*

As Jill Nelson [notes in a piece](#) for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the bill, which had earlier been passed by the Senate, would have outlawed abortion for reasons of gender selection and racial discrimination, and allowed women who are "coerced" to have an abortion to file charges against the abortion provider. The bill would have penalized doctors for third party actions. So a mother who tells her daughter, "Don't get pregnant and bring a baby home," could precipitate criminal charges against the doctor who provided an abortion. The bill was put forward despite the fact that there is no evidence of either coercion, or racial and sex selection abortion in Georgia.

Opposition to this and other similar bills from organizations fighting for reproductive justice was fierce. In a statement, the reproductive justice coalition said:

*"As the three women of color led reproductive justice organizations in Georgia, SisterSong, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, and SisterLove, Inc. are thrilled that this bill never made it out of the House Rules Committee."*

After more than three months of intense lobbying, SisterSong, SPARK, and SisterLove, in coordination with allies, Feminist Women's Health Center (GA) and Planned Parenthood Southeast, "were able to bombard the Speaker's office with calls, emails, and faxes highlighting concerns with the bill posed for women of color and our doctors."

"We truly raised the voices of women of color, and black women in particular, as the session ended, with national support from Civil Rights leaders and clergy", stated Heidi Williamson, National Policy Coordinator for SisterSong. "Now we must do the work of empowering and educating our community on reproductive justice issues." They note, however, that while we won in Georgia, "this may be coming to your state next."

## **WHY ABORTION INSURANCE BANS ARE HEARTLESS AND IMMORAL: ANOTHER PERSONAL STORY**

My sister Karen and her husband Nick were overjoyed when they learned they were pregnant with a baby girl. They named her for my mother and grandmother. After an irregular ultrasound at 12 weeks and follow-up genetic testing, the doctors determined that the baby had monosomy Turner's Syndrome (absence of the second X chromosome). Karen and Nick were told their loved and wanted baby girl would likely not survive to 15 weeks gestation. My sister Karen, her husband Nick and our entire family were heartbroken. Our dreams of a healthy baby had come crashing down.

The days and weeks went by, and at each ultrasound the baby's heart rate decreased. At 20 weeks, she had extreme edema all over her body—a complication caused by Turner's Syndrome which prevents the developing body from reabsorbing any lymph fluid—and the doctors could no longer tell my sister Karen if her baby was experiencing distress. Karen and Nick made a decision; they could not provide any "palliative" care and they wanted to hold their baby girl before she was gone. Karen and Nick decided to induce labor, which at 20 weeks gestation, pre-viability, is an abortion in the state of Missouri as elsewhere in the country. Tragically, the baby's heart stopped beating during the labor and she was stillborn on May 6, 2007. Karen and Nick held her, dressed her, kissed her, loved her, had her baptized, and said their goodbyes. Both sets of grandparents were there to do the same. It was the hardest day in my sister's life...to lose the girl they so desperately wanted.

But when they held her, they knew they had made the right decision. The weeks that followed were incredibly difficult for our entire family. In the midst of this tragic circumstance, our tremendous grief, we were all grateful Nick had health insurance. As Karen wrote to me recently, "I can only imagine how much harder that time would have been if we had been financially devastated because insurance wouldn't have paid." If SB 793 becomes law, my sister would be forced to view and hear state-mandated ideology designed to make her "re-think" her carefully considered decision. The materials and information would not reflect her medical condition and would be completely inappropriate for her situation. In addition if Nick's health insurance was purchased through an exchange, Karen's procedure would not be covered which would have added an unnecessary, and traumatic, burden to their family.

*The names have been changed to preserve the family's privacy. Karen's sister is a Missouri resident.*