



# Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, May 17, 2010

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## LESS THAN TEN MINUTES...

By 10:00am on Friday, by a vote of **114 to 39**, and after less than ten minutes of perfunctory 'debate', the Missouri House passed **SB 793 (Mayer, R-25) the 2010 Abortion Restriction Bill. Rep. Beth Low (D-39)** was the only opponent allowed to speak. In a moving swan song, the outgoing pro-choice champion forcefully criticized the hypocrisy of anti-abortion legislators who—lacking the courage to outright ban abortion in Missouri—seek every year to make it more burdensome to provide and more burdensome for women to access. The Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri issued the following press statement:

## **MISSOURI HOUSE BYPASSES PREVENTION VOTES FOR MORE ABORTION RESTRICTIONS** ***Hours Spent Debating Unnecessary Restrictions while Prevention Bills Denied Committee Hearings***

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Today, the Missouri House gave final approval to the omnibus Abortion Restriction Bill (SB 793 Mayer). The bill intrudes on the doctor-patient relationship and adds many new burdensome and unnecessary requirements to the current 24 hour mandatory delay and informed consent process for abortion.

Abortion is the most highly regulated medical procedure in Missouri. Under current state law, any woman seeking an abortion must go through comprehensive options counseling, sign a consent form stating her decision is completely free and voluntary and then wait at least 24 hours before having the procedure.

In a legislative year dominated by the need to slash the state budget, it's outrageous that the legislators spent valuable legislative time adding even more restrictions to abortion which is now regulated by more than 30 state laws.

SB 793 changes existing law and adds the following further restrictions and burdens:

- 1) women will now be subjected to state-mandated ideological messages that physicians are required to recite, but are not based on medical science;
- 2) abortion facilities will be required to post signs falsely promising women state support and resources it cannot provide;
- 3) all private health insurance companies in Missouri will be prohibited from including abortion coverage in their plans even when paid for with private funds; and
- 4) informed consent consultations will be required to be done face to face, causing further obstacles and delays for women traveling hundreds of miles for abortion care.

This bill does nothing to improve the health and well-being of Missouri women, and it does nothing to help women and couples prevent unintended pregnancies. As a trusted provider of reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood believes every woman should have evenhanded and unbiased information so she can protect her health and make the best decision for herself and her family. A woman needs – and Missouri women get – information about the risks involved with, and alternatives to, abortion but that information should not be written to coerce, shame or pressure the woman into making a decision that is not right for her.

The House Children and Families Committee debated and passed 6 bills restricting abortion this session while ignoring child protection and prevention bills. The vast majority of Missourians support common sense solutions like sex education in schools and increased access to family planning services. The Missouri legislature is out of step with the priorities of the state.

Missouri's elected officials should put politics aside and put the health of Missourians first by passing prevention legislation like the *Prevention First Act (HB 2232/SB 982/SB 696)*.

For more information on the current informed consent process, please [click here](#). [Click here](#) for the Planned Parenthood fact sheet on the informed consent piece of SB 793 and [click here](#) for the insurance ban fact sheet.

*Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri serve more than 71,000 women, men and teens annually with education, family planning, and disease testing and prevention services. [www.ppmissouri.org](http://www.ppmissouri.org)*

## **GOOD NEWS IN A BAD LEGISLATIVE YEAR—EPT/HPV BILL PASSED!**

Soon after the Missouri House voted to shame and coerce women out of abortion, members voted **120 to 33** to pass **HB1375 (Cooper, R-155)**, the **Expedited Partner Therapy/HPV Information** bill. While the HPV section was significantly watered down from the original language proposed by Sen. Justus and almost passed by both bodies last year, it is a start.

This 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. The HPV language in the bill requires MO-DHSS to produce a brochure about the connection between HPV and cervical cancer and informing parents there is a vaccine that can protect against it. The brochure is to be made available on the DHSS website and school districts can decide if they want to avail themselves of it and distribute it directly to parents; it may not be sent home with the student.

**Rep. Bryan Pratt (R-55)**, who handled the Abortion Restriction bill in the House and who argued strenuously and often loudly that women must be given more information about the abortion procedure and alternatives to abortion so they will choose not to have one, voted NO to making information available that can help protect 6th grade girls from cervical cancer...

## **GOODBYE, AND THANK YOU TO OUR PRO-CHOICE CHAMPIONS WHO ARE LEAVING...**

While they will still serve until the next class is sworn in, and they will be in Jefferson City on September 15 for veto session, PPMO extends a most heartfelt thank you to those members of both chambers who have listened to testimony, prodded sponsors, sponsored and co-sponsored pro-active legislation, talked, inquired, debated, objected, amended, filibustered, and voted NO to more onerous restrictions to women's access to reproductive healthcare; who have supported prevention programs; who have been passionate and dogged and have let out tears of frustration and anger; and who have **never wavered** from their convictions that abortion must remain legal and safe, and that the **ONLY WAY** to safely reduce abortions is to focus on reducing unintended pregnancies through better sex education and increased access to contraception.

And, thank you to those other members who were, upon occasion, able to find areas of common ground in the prevention agenda; we wish you well and hope you will work with PPMO to educate the next class of freshmen to focus on prevention.

## **AFTER ST. JOSEPH'S: ARE WOMEN STILL SAFE IN CATHOLIC HOSPITALS?**

*By Jacob Appel, HuffPost: May 16, 2010*

One of the defining and moderating aspects of the contemporary American debate surrounding the legalization of abortion is that the controversy only applies to elective procedures where the life of the mother is not in serious jeopardy. In contrast, the right of a woman to choose her own life over that of a fetus or embryo has not been seriously questioned in the United States and, except in a handful of cases involving women in comas, no American court or legislature has challenged this principle in recent memory. Even the Catholic Church, whose official doctrine demands that women be sacrificed in order to preserve fetal life, has for many years made no attempt to impose such a draconian policy upon its vast network of hospitals in the United States. Until last week. In a radical move that is likely to inflame the abortion debate even further and, more disturbingly, to endanger the lives of millions of expectant mothers, Thomas J. Olmsted, the Catholic bishop of Phoenix, Arizona, has condemned and excommunicated a highly regarded nun who approved an abortion necessary to save a pregnant woman's life.

To read the full article, go to: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacob-m-appel/after-st-josephs-are-wome\\_b\\_578086.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacob-m-appel/after-st-josephs-are-wome_b_578086.html)