

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MISSOURI HOUSE NEEDS SEX EDUCATION –
OR AT LEAST A BIOLOGY CLASS**

**Debate over amendment encouraging Pharmacists to deny birth control prescriptions
filled with misinformation**

Jefferson City, MO - Yesterday, the Missouri House of Representatives voted to pass House Amendment 1 to SB 296 protecting pharmacies that refuse to fill prescriptions or sell over-the-counter medication to women seeking birth control. Further, it allows pharmacies to gag pharmacists from even telling women where they can get birth control. Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri believe pharmacies that stock birth control have an obligation to ensure all legal medications are dispensed in a timely manner—and without a lecture.

During the debate many legislators showed a clear lack of understanding about pregnancy and reproduction. Opponents of abortion—who drafted and supported this amendment—insist on treating birth control and abortion as one and the same. They are not. Birth control prevents pregnancy and does nothing if you are already pregnant. Abortion terminates a pregnancy. Currently FDA approved birth control is available by prescription and over-the-counter at some pharmacies. Mifeprex, an FDA approved abortifacient is not available through a pharmacy, but only under a strict Provider Agreement between the manufacturer and the abortion provider.

Prior to creating new laws that govern access to birth control, Planned Parenthood recommends legislators take a lesson in reproductive biology and get their facts straight.

When a doctor prescribes medication, he or she expects that prescription to be filled in-store without discrimination or delay. The government should not bend over backwards to protect pharmacists who impose their moral judgments on anyone seeking to get their lawful prescriptions filled. Contraception is basic health care for women; no woman should be denied access to basic health care because of a pharmacist's personal 'beliefs'.

The leadership in the Missouri House continues to chase the wrong priorities. Our state is facing a serious budget crisis, growing unemployment, and sky-rocketing health insurance premiums yet the Missouri House has responded by slashing health care and social service programs and wasting hours and hours debating ways to restrict access to birth control and abortion.

As the nation's leading advocate and provider of reproductive health services, Planned Parenthood knows that comprehensive sex education and birth control are the best tools for preventing unintended pregnancy and reducing the need for abortion. We are calling on our elected officials to put aside their differences, pass prevention legislation like the *Prevention First Act* and put the health of women and families first.

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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.

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