



For Immediate Release
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State Judge Upholds New Abortion Law

Providers and Clergy Vow to Appeal to State Supreme Court

Kansas City, MO – Planned Parenthood and the Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice today vowed to appeal a ruling upholding a new state law that would prohibit trusted adults – including clergy, family members, teachers, mentors or health care providers – from aiding a young woman who, for good reason, cannot involve a parent in her decision to have an abortion.

“As parents, we all want our teenagers to be safe. But if for whatever reason they feel they can’t come to us, they deserve the aid and assistance of trusted health professionals when dealing with this difficult decision, and that’s why we will immediately appeal today’s ruling,” said Peter Brownlie, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri.

Judge Charles Atwell of the Jackson County State Circuit Court expressed “substantial trepidation” in finding the statute constitutional. In an act of judicial activism, Judge Atwell rewrote the law in an effort to uphold it. However, he chose to continue the injunction barring enforcement of the law until a higher court could determine whether his construction “effectively rewrites the statute.”

“We are pleased that the court continued the injunction. It is clear that Judge Atwell shares our serious concerns about the central issue in this case – the ability for health providers to offer teens information,” continued Brownlie.

“We fought this law because it jeopardizes the safety of teens by closing down communication and access to information, said Paula Gianino, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region. “Parents want their teenagers to be safe, but the government cannot mandate healthy family communication. We will appeal this ruling to protect teens access to safe and reliable information.”

“Some teens cannot talk with their parents about these sensitive issues, and turn to their trusted clergy for support. Yet Judge Atwell agrees that this law raises serious concerns about whether our clergy members can provide that trusted and confidential support to teens without fear of being sued,” said Reverend Becky Turner, Executive Director of the Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. “We are eager for a final resolution to this issue so that clergy can continue to counsel our youth.”

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