



For Immediate Release

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Planned Parenthood Sues State over Health Endangerment Law
Barring information to teens is unconstitutional

SEPTEMBER 15, 2005 (Kansas City, MO) - Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri and Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region filed a lawsuit against a new law that creates civil liability for trusted adults - including family members, teachers, mentors, counselors, clergy members or health care providers - who "cause, aid or assist" a young woman who - for good reason - can't involve a parent in her decision to have an abortion. The law went into immediate effect today when the Governor signed Senate Bill 1 (SB 1).

"We are concerned about the health and safety of teens and for all women in Missouri," said Paula Gianino, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region. "Planned Parenthood pledges to do everything we can through the courts to challenge this law."

"Parents want their teenagers to be safe. But legislators are interfering with their safety by passing laws that isolate them from trusted adults," said Peter Brownlie, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. "Preventing family members, ministers and health care providers from giving information to teens is not only wrong - it's unconstitutional."

On Wednesday afternoon, the Missouri House gave final passage to the Health Endangerment Bill (SB 1), which will discourage teens from speaking to trusted adults during times of crisis. It prevents young people from having access to critical information when they need it most. This bill may also force a women's healthcare provider in southwest Missouri to close -- leaving thousands without access to birth control, or safe and legal abortion services.

"This unprecedented and dangerous law attempts to impose Missouri's legal restrictions on Missouri teens when they travel outside the state," said Eve Gartner, senior staff attorney for Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "The law threatens health care providers within and outside Missouri who provide accurate medical information and/or safe, legal health care services to a young person in need. The law violates the Missouri Constitution and the U.S. Constitution and puts young people at risk."

The Missouri House and Senate refused to take up the Prevention First Act sponsored by Senator Joan Bray and Representative Robin Wright Jones, which would expand access to proven prevention programs like family planning, emergency contraception and comprehensive sex education.

"This legislation is morally bankrupt. The Legislature says it wants to reduce abortions, but instead it ignores proven prevention programs and puts women's health and safety at risk," said Brownlie.

The Planned Parenthood suit filed in the State Circuit Court in Jackson County seeks an immediate temporary restraining order to prevent the law being enforced.

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