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State Judge Blocks Governor Blunt's New Abortion Law
Second Judge to issue a temporary restraining order against unconstitutional law

Kansas City, MO – Judge Charles Atwell issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) barring enforcement of a new state law that creates civil liability for trusted adults – including clergy, family members, teachers, mentors or health care providers – who “cause, aid or assist” a young woman who – for good reason – cannot involve a parent in her decision to have an abortion. A separate TRO was previously granted by a Federal Judge to a similar lawsuit blocking this law. The ruling came after Judge Atwell heard arguments last week from Planned Parenthood attorneys seeking the TRO. The law was signed by Governor Blunt after an unusual special session of the Legislature.

“We believe this law jeopardizes the health and safety of Missouri teens,” said Peter Brownlie, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. “That’s why Planned Parenthood is fighting the law in court and why the temporary restraining order is a good first step.”

“Parents want their teenagers to be safe. Isolating teens from information and counsel from a trusted adult in a time of crisis will not keep teens safe,” said Paula Gianino, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region.

Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri and Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region filed the suit in Jackson County’s State Circuit Court when the law went into effect on September 15th.

"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."

After failing to enact draconian anti-choice legislation in the last days of the regular 2005 Legislative Session, Governor Blunt was heavily criticized by Missouri Right to Life and other anti-choice lobby groups. This month Governor Blunt called legislators back to Jefferson City for a special session on abortion restrictions in an attempt to deflect criticism from anti-choice lobby groups.

During the special session, 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.

“If Governor Blunt truly wanted to make abortion rare, he would expand access to family planning, emergency contraception and sex education,” said Gianino. “This law is cruel evidence that Governor Blunt prioritizes politics over women’s health.”

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