



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: MORCRC: Rev. Rebecca Turner, 314-531-5010
PPSLR: Erin Meyer, 314-531-7526
PPKM: Sheila Kostas, 913-312-5100 x246
PPRM: Kellie Rohrbaugh, 417-894-4413**

**Proposed ballot initiative puts politicians and bureaucrats in charge of health care decisions;
Denies patients honest information and threatens doctors with unending lawsuits**

Monday, March 3, 2008: Jefferson City, MO - Today, the Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri (PPMO) and the Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (MORCRC) applauded a legal challenge, filed by Mary Hickey of St. Louis, to the second initiative petition submitted by Illinois-based David Reardon in so many months. This version was certified on February 21st.

“We will fight this initiative because it is dangerous and extreme,” said Peter Brownlie, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. “I don’t believe the people of Missouri want politicians and bureaucrats deciding what treatments grown adults can receive or what treatments doctors can recommend.”

“The measure is so poorly written with vague and undefined terms so that no one is completely sure what it does, how far it goes or how it could be enforced,” stated Paula Gianino, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region. “What is clear is this measure would force doctors to provide questionable and in some cases false information to their patients instead of the open honest discussion that is best for patients.”

“This measure will hurt women and deny them access to the professional health care they deserve because of David Reardon’s politically motivated goals,” stated the Reverend Rebecca Turner, Executive Director of Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

“This measure may seem to target women – but it sets a precedent that politicians and bureaucrats can dictate what treatments any patient can qualify for and what treatments doctors can prescribe,” said Tonia Stubblefield, CEO of Tri-Rivers Planned Parenthood.

The vast majority of Missourians¹ believe that decisions about medical care, including abortion, should be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor. Planned Parenthood and MORCRC stand behind this belief and will stand up for Missourians on this issue. “Missouri already has some of the nation’s strongest laws requiring informed consent and a waiting period for abortion – so it’s clear that the measure is not really about that, it is about extreme politics,” said Kellie Rohrbaugh, Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood of Southwest Missouri.

Planned Parenthood and the Missouri Religious Coalition oppose both of Mr. Reardon’s initiatives and will do everything possible to protect access to safe and legal health care, including the right to abortion care in Missouri.

For the summary language and full text of the initiative go to:

http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/2008petitions/08init_pet.asp#2008027

NOTE: Tuesday, March 4 is Protect Women’s Health Lobby Day. Teams of activist will be at the Capitol urging their elected officials to support the Prevention First Act and vote **NO** on HB1831 and SB1058 should they come to a vote.

####

Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri serve more than 80,000 clients annually through well woman exams, family planning visits, STI and cancer screenings, and education services. The Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is a statewide coalition of diverse religious organizations that believe a woman should be free to make reproductive health choices according to her own conscience and faith.

¹ 63% of Missourians strongly believe the government should not interfere with private healthcare decisions made between a patient and her doctor: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Sept 07—more information: www.ppmissouri.org