

**TESTIMONY OF MISSOURI RIGHT TO LIFE
BEFORE THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF HB 1357
February 22, 2012**

Missouri Right to Life supports the passage of HB 1357. HB 1357 protects the rights of alternatives-to-abortion agencies and its officers, agents, employees, and volunteer to freely assemble and to freely engage in religious practices and speech without governmental interference.

The Missouri General Assembly takes a firm and unwavering stand against an unconstitutional infringement on the rights of its citizens. The majority of Missouri citizens are pro-life and our voice is heard through the voice of our locally and nationally elected officials. .

With the recent attack on our Religious Liberties by the Obama Administration by creating a health care mandate which forces the Catholic Church, other churches and religious organizations to go against their deeply held religious beliefs to violate their conscience or be subject to a penalty. People of faith who provide health services through the alternatives-to-abortion program are in fear of government attacks. Those agencies providing services to women in crisis should not be forced to offer or refer for abortion services against their deeply held religious beliefs or to violate their conscience or be in fear of penalties for not doing so.

These attacks on religious institutions are clear evidence of why the federal government should stay out of our healthcare and why we need protection for our agencies who are helping women in crisis pregnancies.