

Questions & Answers on Voting Records

The vote tallies for the 2011 legislative session are now complete and available on the website at www.missourilife.org. Some of the most common questions and answers regarding the voting records are:

Why does Missouri Right to Life count legislative votes?

One of the primary responsibilities that MRL has to the pro-life voters of Missouri is to closely follow a legislator's actions on legislation involving the core life issues of abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, human cloning and embryonic stem cell research. Anyone can claim to be pro-life, but the way they vote on relevant legislation is how they prove it.

What legislative votes are counted?

MRL's legislative team and Executive Board closely follow proposed legislation and determine whether or not a proposed bill has either a positive or negative impact on our issues. We make our position known to the legislators by testifying at hearings, distributing memos and e-mails, and personally contacting legislators. Every vote that advances a good bill is a pro-life vote. Every vote that advances an anti-life bill or weakens a pro-life bill is an anti-life vote.

Why do committee votes and procedural votes count the same as a final vote on a piece of legislation?

Procedural votes are every bit as important as a final vote. Unless a bill gets out of committee and moves through the legislative process, it can never get to a final vote. There are many ways to affect a particular piece of legislation by the procedural votes along the way. Unless all votes are counted, a situation could arise where a legislator took one position in committee or on the procedural votes and then voted differently on the final vote.

Why does MRL count the votes to "call the previous question" (PQ) when those votes are often dictated by party leadership?

The PQ votes are often critical in advancing or killing the progress of legislation. While not all PQ votes have equal impact, in order to be consistent and fair to members of both parties and members of both houses of the legislature, PQ votes will be counted the same as other procedural votes on legislation that impact our issues.

How does MRL use the voting records?

The voting record of a legislator seeking our endorsement is an important factor for MRL's Political Action Committee (PAC) in deciding whether or not a particular legislator has earned a campaign endorsement. The MRL PAC considers up to a four-year voting record when determining the endorsability of a candidate. For a legislator who has served in office over four years, only the most recent four-year voting record will be

considered. For a legislator who has served less than four years, all of their voting records will be used.

What about an anti-life candidate who has a good voting record on MRL's issues?

Occasionally a legislator who is not with us on our issues will vote as we recommend. However, because that legislator is not with us on the issues, we know that his vote was for a reason other than pro-life concerns. Therefore, the voting records of legislators who are not with us are irrelevant as they will not be considered for endorsement.