

Missouri Right to Life

Press Release

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For Information
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The following statement can be attributed to Pam Fichter, President of Missouri Right to Life:

Today the Missouri House third read and finally passed HB 1357 which would bar local governments from regulating the speech and advertising of centers that offer counsel to women on alternatives to abortion.

The legislation is a reaction to attempts around the country—most of which have already been tossed out in courts—to dictate what these alternative to abortion organizations must say to their clients. Harassment laws enacted in New York City and Baltimore have already been overturned by federal judges on First Amendment grounds. The latest onslaught—in San Francisco—is being challenged in court.

Supporters point to language in the court decision striking down the Baltimore ordinance:

“[I]t is for the provider – not the Government – to decide when and how to discuss abortion and birth-control methods. The Government cannot, consistent with the First Amendment, require a ‘pro-life’ pregnancy-related service center to post a sign as would be required by the Ordinance.”

Abortion advocates have tried to convince the public that Pregnancy Resource Centers are distributing “medically inaccurate” information. What that means is that pro-lifers are distributing information pro-abortionists don’t agree with. In particular pro-abortionists object to information on the link between having an induced abortion and an increased risk of breast cancer; and that there can be mental health consequences to having an abortion. There are extensive studies to prove both these facts.

Under this legislation, the court may order injunctive relief, recovery of damages, or both, as well as payment of reasonable attorney fees, costs and expenses for the state to enforce these provisions.

The bill now moves to the Senate. In these last days of session, unless amended on to another bill, it will be an uphill battle for HB1357 to be passed.