

Missouri Senate Fails to Pass Women's Protection Act Requiring Annual Inspection of Abortion Facilities

The following statement can be attributed to Steve Rupp, President of Missouri Right to Life:

Missouri Right to Life (MRL) is profoundly disappointed that the Missouri Senate has failed to approve an important public safety measure to ensure the annual inspection of abortion facilities. HB 190, introduced by Rep. Kathy Swan (R-Cape Girardeau), would have ensured annual inspections for licensed abortion facilities. It would have ensured that an inspection would not be "optional" for any Department of Health official, bureaucracy, or state executive to forego this much-needed requirement.

The measure was third read and finally passed by the House with a vote of 119-35 on February 25 and sent to the Senate. An identical bill, SB 33, introduced by Sen. Wayne Wallingford (R-Cape Girardeau) was never acted on by the Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, Senator Dixon, Chairman, since being assigned on January 15, 2015.

In the final week of the legislative session, on Tuesday, all efforts to pass legislation in the Senate stalled due to the procedural move to call for the previous question on right to work. While we know that other issues are important to Missourians, there was no need to call for the PQ on Tuesday when there were other extremely important issues still on the calendar needing passage by the Republican majority. The PQ could have been called on Friday.

Reproductive Health Services of Planned Parenthood St. Louis Region has had an inconsistent inspection history according to public records. In addition, complaints have been filed against the St. Louis abortion facility based on multiple documented reports of the presence of emergency medical personnel and ambulances. The ambulance visits have numbered over two dozen in just 5 years. One such ambulance visit was as recent as this past February.

Missouri Right to Life and pro-life groups around the state have advocated for this necessary legislation due to the lack of oversight by the Department of Health and troubling inspection history at the St. Louis abortion facility. The horrendous crimes that have been committed in other abortion facilities across this nation, especially the Gosnell clinic in Pennsylvania and the Karpen clinic in Texas have brought the need for this type of legislation to a critical level. And now we wait for another entire year before women can expect a level of safety that should be guaranteed to them by the State.

While we are grateful that the General Assembly passed increased funding for our Alternatives to Abortion Program and pro-life protections on the Economic Development Budget Bill, we are profoundly disappointed that a purported "pro-life legislature" did not pass a bill addressing the dangers of abortion.

At last report from the Department of Health, there were 9,027 abortions in 2012. The taking of lives of innocent human babies and the women who are at risk are still ongoing "emergency situations" that should have been addressed by the Missouri Senate on multiple bills this year.

We look forward to working with the Missouri legislators to pass pro-life legislation in the 2016 legislative session.

Missouri Right to Life is the state's largest and most experienced grassroots Pro-Life organization. MRL works through education, legislation and political action to promote the Sanctity of Life for all, from conception to natural death.

