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JUDGE BEETEM SIDES WITH PRO-ABORTION ACLU, STRIKES DOWN ASHCROFT'S TRUTHFUL BALLOT LANGUAGE

Today, Judge Beetem struck down Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft's truthful ballot language for 6 pro-abortion initiative petitions that were filed in March (Fitz-James vs. Ashcroft, Case No. 23AC-CC03167 et. al.). Judge Beetem's order included new rewritten ballot language declaring that Secretary Ashcroft's language was "problematic" and "argumentative" or unfair, which was what the ACLU had argued. Judge Beetem ruled in favor of the pro-abortion petitioner and her ACLU attorneys. Judge Beetem's ruling certified new summary statements that minimize the devastating impacts of these pro-abortion initiative petitions that would support a Constitutional right to abortion on demand all nine months of pregnancy.

Secretary of State Ashcroft's truthful ballot language that Judge Beetem ruled against and removed from the ballot summary statement are the following phrases:

- "dangerous, unregulated, and unrestricted abortions"
- "from conception to live birth"
- "without requiring a medical license"
- "without...potentially being subject to medical malpractice"
- "nullify longstanding Missouri law"
- "the right to life"
- "partial-birth abortion"
- "including a minor"
- "end the life"
- "unborn child"
- "at any time"
- "potentially including tax-payer funding"
- "prohibit any municipality, city, town, village, district, authority, public subdivision, or public corporation having the power to tax or regulate the state of Missouri from regulating abortion procedures"

With Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft's ballot summary language removed, Judge Beetem has decreed that the people of Missouri will not have the clearest picture of the dangerous consequences when considering whether or not to sign the petition to put this amendment on the ballot. Likewise, the new ballot summary language Judge Beetem ordered that would amend our Missouri Constitution does not convey to Missouri voters the actual impact of the petition, should voters pass it into law.

Furthermore, Judge Beetem issued a separate ruling against pro-life petitioners in a separately filed case (Kelly v. Fitzpatrick, et. al., Case No. 23-AC-CC04802) who had argued the fiscal note summary part of the ballot language written by the State Auditor was insufficient and unfair.

Missouri Right to Life is extremely disappointed that Judge Beetem would rule in favor of extreme pro-abortion advocates at the expense of language that accurately portrays the devastating effect these petitions would have on Missouri women and children and Missouri's balanced budget.

Missouri Right to Life expects that the rulings on these cases will be appealed and prays a higher court will support Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft's truthful ballot summary statement, and rule in favor of pro-life petitioners in supporting an accurate fiscal note.