

SS SCS SB 65 -- LATE-TERM ABORTIONS

SPONSOR: Mayer (Jones, 89)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 10 to 1.

This substitute specifies that no abortion of a viable unborn child can be performed or induced except in the case of a medical emergency where the abortion is necessary to preserve the life of the pregnant woman whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, illness, or injury or when the continuation of the pregnancy will create a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function of the pregnant woman. Except in the case of a medical emergency, a physician must, prior to performing or inducing an abortion, determine the gestational age of the unborn child in a manner consistent with accepted obstetrical and neonatal practices and standards.

If a physician determines that the gestational age of the unborn child is 20 weeks or more, he or she must, prior to performing or inducing an abortion, determine if the unborn child is viable by performing medical examinations and tests as are necessary to make a finding of the gestational age, weight, and lung maturity of the unborn child and enter that information in the woman's medical record. If a physician determines the gestational age of the unborn child is 20 weeks or more and the unborn child is not viable and an abortion is performed or induced, the physician must report these findings and determinations and the reasons for the determinations to the health care facility in which the abortion is performed and to the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts within the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration. The physician must also enter the determinations in the woman's medical records and in the individual abortion report submitted to the Department of Health and Senior Services. If a physician determines that the unborn child is viable, the physician cannot perform or induce an abortion except in the case of a medical emergency.

A physician must certify in writing the medical threat posed to the life of the pregnant woman or the medical reasons that continuation of the pregnancy would cause a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function of the pregnant woman before the physician can proceed with performing or inducing an abortion on a woman when it has been determined that the unborn child is viable.

Before a physician may perform or induce an abortion on a woman carrying an unborn child that has been determined to be viable,

he or she must:

(1) Certify in writing and obtain the agreement of a second physician who has knowledge of accepted obstetrical and neonatal practices and standards that the abortion is necessary to preserve the life of the pregnant woman or that continuation of the pregnancy would cause a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function of the pregnant woman. The second physician cannot have any legal or financial affiliation or relationship with the physician performing or inducing the abortion; however, this will not apply to a physician whose affiliation or relationship is the result of being employed by or having staff privileges at the same hospital;

(2) Use the available method or technique of abortion that is most likely to preserve the life or health of the unborn child; and

(3) Have in attendance at the abortion a second physician who is responsible for taking control of and providing immediate medical care for a child born as a result of the abortion.

Any person who knowingly performs or induces an abortion of an unborn child in violation of these provisions will be guilty of a class C felony and subject to imprisonment for not less than one year and a fine of not less than \$10,000 or more than \$50,000. Any physician licensed in this state who performs or induces an abortion of an unborn child in violation of these provisions can have his or her license suspended or revoked by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts. Any licensed hospital or ambulatory surgical center that knowingly allows an abortion to be performed or induced in violation of these provisions can be subject to the suspension or revocation of its license.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Cost on General Revenue Fund of Less than \$102,760 in FY 2012, Less than \$100,000 in FY 2013, and Less than \$100,000 in FY 2014. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill provides protection for a viable child while still in the womb in a way that will be upheld in court. The bill is not similar to any being heard in other states that are imposing a strict ban on all abortions at 20 weeks. The gestation age of 20 weeks is acknowledged by the United States Supreme Court.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Mayer; Missouri Family Network; Missouri Right to Life; and Missouri Family Policy Council.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that late-term abortions are performed for women who want to be pregnant and are making heart-breaking decisions to abort a child who would not survive or have a meaningful life outside of the womb due to a serious health condition. Women are not aborting healthy fetuses at 20 weeks gestation. Late-term abortions are rare, and the bill will cause more harm than good.

Testifying against the bill was Planned Parenthood Affiliates in Missouri.