

HB 400 -- ADMINISTRATION OF ABORTION-INDUCING DRUGS AND CHEMICALS

SPONSOR: Riddle

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 8 to 1.

This bill requires the administration of RU-486 (mifepristone) or any other abortion-inducing drug or chemical to occur in the same room and in the physical presence of the physician who prescribed, dispensed, or otherwise provided the drug or chemical to the patient. The physician or a person acting on the physician's behalf must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the patient returns within 12 to 18 days after the administration or use of any abortion-inducing drug or chemical for a follow-up visit to confirm the termination of the pregnancy and assess the patient's medical condition. At a minimum, the physician must include in the patient's medical records the date, time, and name of the person attempting to ensure that the patient returns for the follow-up visit.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is primarily concerned with women's safety and health. There is a lack of responsibility once a woman walks out of an abortion clinic. The bill requires the physician inducing the abortion to continue to be responsible for the medical and psychological well being of the woman. The bill will also prevent webcam abortions by requiring the physician to be present for the chemical abortion.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Riddle; Carolyn Tucker; Susan Jaramillo; Missouri Right to Life; Campaign Life Missouri; Americans United for Life; Missouri Family Policy Council; Missouri Catholic Conference; Joanne Schrader; and Kathy Forck.

OPPONENTS: Opponents of the bill say that it puts women at risk. The requirement that the woman take the second pill in the presence of the physician may cause the woman to start expelling the pregnancy while driving home. Chemical abortion is otherwise safe and has a much lower risk of death than carrying a pregnancy to term. By requiring all of the chemical abortion pills to be taken in front of the physician the bill is limiting access to abortion services by women in rural areas.

Testifying against the bill were Dr. Colleen McNicholas, Physicians for Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Missouri; Ann Leer, ACLU of Eastern Missouri; and NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri.