

HCS HJR 131 -- ABORTION

SPONSOR: Sparks

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 10 to 5. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HJR 131.

Upon voter approval, this Constitutional amendment prohibits the performance or inducement of an abortion upon a woman, except in cases of medical emergency. A person who violates this provision will be guilty of a class B felony and subject to the suspension or revocation of his or her professional license. A woman upon whom an abortion is performed or induced in violation of this amendment will not be prosecuted for a conspiracy to violate the provisions of this amendment. The General Assembly will not add any further exceptions to the prohibitions on abortions unless such exceptions are put to a vote of the people, in accordance with the Missouri Constitution.

The General Assembly may provide for an income tax credit for contributions that are made to agencies providing support to pregnant women and new mothers, born and unborn children, and their families, including nonprofit pregnancy resource centers, provided that any law authorizing such credits not allow for any credits to be authorized by an entity that performs, induces, or refers for abortions, or holds itself out as performing, inducing, or referring for abortions.

This bill is the same as SJR 87 (2024).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the people should be able to vote on amending the Constitution to include the abortion exceptions listed in this legislation. Missouri citizens have been asking for legislation that allows them to directly vote on a prolife Constitutional amendment. This legislation mirrors what is currently in State law and allows voters to choose whether to add this language to the Missouri Constitution. Supporters believe life begins at conception and this legislation helps to protect life at all stages.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Sparks; Missouri Catholic Conference; Campaign Life Missouri; and Arnie Dienoff.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this legislation restricts women's rights to make decisions concerning their own bodies. These rights include the right to continue or terminate a pregnancy. Legislation banning or restricting abortion infringes upon this basic human right. Abortion is a crucial component of women's healthcare. Banning or restricting abortions forces women seeking an abortion to pursue more dangerous alternatives that can result in adverse health consequences. Restrictions on abortions disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, including low-income, minority, and rural communities. Legal abortion services help to reduce maternal mortality rates and prevent unsafe, unauthorized abortions. It is not the place of lawmakers to interfere with a woman's choice regarding her own body.

Testifying in person against the bill were Abortion Action Missouri (Formerly Pro Choice Missouri); Advocates of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri; Missouri Family Health Council, Incorporated; and American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say they are in support of pregnancy resource centers and are opposed to the prosecution of women because a majority of women are coerced into having an abortion. However, others do not believe this issue needs to be a ballot issue at this time.

Testifying in person on the bill was Missouri Right to Life.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.