

Senator John Loudon's Informed Consent Act Nears Final Passage

Measure Helps Ensure Access to Information for Important Decision Making

JEFFERSON CITY – Legislation drafted and advanced by Senator John Loudon, R-Ballwin, placing civil liability on violators of Missouri's informed consent law is progressing through the House and Senate and will likely soon travel to the governor's desk.

Missouri's informed consent law requires women under age 18 seeking to terminate their pregnancies to first show their doctor written permission from a parent or legal guardian before proceeding with an abortion. Loudon's measure would help stop the current practice of pregnant minors seeking abortions in states with weaker informed consent laws (like bordering Illinois) by making anyone transporting minors in these instances civilly liable.

"Missouri's informed consent law is in place to ensure that pregnant minors and their parents can together participate in choosing a course of action on a very important event that is typically situated in a highly emotional environment," Loudon said. "My legislation preserves access to information of great use in the decision making process and punishes those intent on bypassing this resource and circumventing the law."

Loudon's bill allows civil jury awards for damages, including attorney's fees and court costs, for pregnant minors and their parents or guardians harmed by persons willfully dodging the intent of Missouri's informed consent law.

Loudon is optimistic about the bill's final passage as the year's regular legislative session draws to a close.

"We got this issue out in front of the General Assembly and before the general public last year and were just a step away from enacting the informed consent protections when time ran out." Loudon said. "We're further along in the process today than we were at this point last year and I believe a majority of my House and Senate colleagues are committed to supporting this legislation that clearly meshes with the views held by a prevailing number of Missourians."