



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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## Challenge to Senator Loudon's Parental Consent Law Heard by State Supreme Court

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### *Measure reinforces Missouri's parental consent law*

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, today announced he was happy the Missouri Supreme Court has finally taken up his pro-life legislation keeping individuals from circumventing Missouri's parental consent law for abortions. The measure, passed by the Legislature in 2005 as Senate Bill 1, allows parents to sue individuals for taking their minor daughters across state lines to have abortions without consent.

“Missouri's parental consent law was enacted to protect young women by allowing their parents in on an extremely important decision they should not have to make alone,” Loudon said. “Those who undermine the law violate the rights of parents and endanger these young women. In our society, if you violate someone's rights, you should be held accountable.”

Missouri's parental consent law requires individuals under 18 who are seeking abortions to show their doctors written permission from a parent or legal guardian or from a judge before undergoing the procedure. Loudon's legislation makes civilly liable individuals who help transport minors across state lines to get abortions in states with no consent laws. Of particular concern is the Hope Clinic for Women in Granite City, Ill. — just across the state line from St. Louis — which has advertised Illinois' lack of a parental consent law

SB 1 has been challenged in court by pro-choice activists. However, a Jackson County judge upheld the law last year, and the state Supreme Court yesterday questioned the legitimacy of the argument against the law.

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Planned Parenthood is arguing that SB 1 is an infringement on the free-speech right to tell minors they can have abortions in states without consent laws. However, the legislation makes no mention of speech, as was pointed out yesterday by Chief Justice Michael Wolff. Rather, it states that no one may “cause, aid, or assist” a minor to get an abortion without parental consent. Further, lawyers from the offices of the St. Louis prosecutor and Missouri attorney general said they interpret the law as applying only to conduct, such as transportation across state lines.

“Nowhere does the law say anything about speech,” Loudon said. “This is about actively undermining the law and endangering young women. It seems to me the abortion industry does not have a good argument on the issue so they have conjured up this free-speech claim. I expect this case will be resolved in favor of parents and their daughters, and this measure will be finally added to Missouri law.”

“Sadly, a bill in Congress that would have extended these rights to parents in every state appears to be dead,” Loudon continued. “That means that if Missouri leads, this will need to be a state-by-state battle.”

The bill passed both chambers of Congress but has been stalled by a Democratic filibuster.

The need for an enforceable parent consent law was underscored by recent reports of a tragic incident in which a 41-year-old Arkansas man repeatedly raped and abused a 15-year-old girl, then forced her to have an abortion at the Granite City clinic — the same one that advertises Illinois’ lack of a parental consent law.

“This is a disturbing example of how these loose abortion policies can make tragic circumstances even worse,” Loudon said. “This should not have been allowed to happen. There need to be measures in place to help ensure that no one is coerced into undergoing this tragic procedure, and that is precisely what the parental consent law is designed to do.”

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