



MISSOURI SENATE

Jason Crowell
27th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 323
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**For Immediate Release:
February 14, 2006**

**Contact: Andrew Green
(573) 751-2459**

Judiciary Committee Hears Sen. Crowell's Bill Protecting Rights of Pharmacists

JEFFERSON CITY— The Senate Judiciary Committee heard public testimony yesterday on a bill sponsored by state Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, granting pharmacists the right to uphold their personal beliefs when working behind the counter.

Senate Bill 609 holds that pharmaceutical professionals shall not be required to perform, assist, recommend, refer for, or participate in any service involving a particular drug or device that is used for abortions. Most of the debate pertains to Plan B, the “morning-after” pill, which, if taken within 72 hours after unprotected sex, can prevent a fertilized egg from becoming attached to the uterus.

“A degree in pharmacy should not bind pharmacists to practices that they consider morally reprehensible, such as inducing abortions,” Crowell said. “Doctors and nurses have the right to not perform abortions; pharmacists should be afforded that same right to a clean conscience.”

In December, a Target pharmacist in St. Charles was fired after refusing to sign a document guaranteeing she would dispense emergency contraception or refer women to another pharmacy. To prevent this from happening again, Crowell’s legislation also prohibits employers from refusing to hire, discriminating against, segregating or terminating the employment of any pharmaceutical professional who opposes such services.

“The majority of the people in our state believe that the rights of the unborn include the right to be born,” Crowell said. “If pharmacists feel that filling a certain prescription takes that right to be born away, then they should not be legally forced to go against their moral convictions.”

The bill must be approved by the committee before it goes to the Senate floor for debate by the full body.