

Week of March 23, 2009



Senator David Pearce – Serving Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties

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Defending Life

For me, one of the most important aspects of my job as a senator is to create and refine laws that protect people, especially those who are unable to defend themselves. Sometimes this means creating new laws and other times it means taking a stand against legislation that does not serve the state's role in protecting life at all stages. Unborn babies are perhaps the most vulnerable of all, which is why I am supporting two pieces of legislation that preserve our commitment to defend them.

I have signed on to co-sponsor [Senate Concurrent Resolution 11](#), which takes a stand against the misleading "Freedom of Choice Act" introduced by Congress in 2007. This dangerous legislation is designed to make abortion the federal law of the land, and if passed, would destroy many of the protections that we, and so many others before us, have fought to put in place in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision more than 35 years ago. This legislation is still pending in committees in both the U.S. House and Senate, but we cannot allow it to gain any more ground.

Essentially the Freedom of Choice Act would place into federal law an unlimited right to an abortion during all stages of pregnancy. In Missouri, we respect life, and we believe it is our duty as a state to protect our citizens, born or unborn. However, if this legislation were to become law, many of the carefully drafted safeguards for unborn babies and expectant mothers in our law books would be null and void. In addition, Missouri citizens might be forced to subsidize abortions through their tax dollars.

Passing SCR 11, especially with a solid bipartisan majority, would send a strong message to the President and the U.S. Congress that Missouri resoundingly stands on the

side of life and that we strongly oppose any of the federal government's efforts to offer nearly unrestricted abortion rights.

This week the Senate also took up another abortion-related bill, SB 264, which makes it a crime to coerce a woman into having an abortion. Anyone who pressures a woman through aggressive means—such as assault, stalking or any other criminal offense—or who threatens to fire her from her job or revokes a scholarship could be charged with the crime of coercing an abortion.

[Senate Bill 264](#) would also expand the state's current informed consent requirements for abortions, requiring that new printed and video materials be presented to women considering the procedure. This information would detail the risks of an abortion and the physiological characteristics of an unborn child at different stages of development. A woman would also be given the opportunity to view an ultrasound and hear the heartbeat of the unborn child.

We discussed SB 264 at length this week, and unfortunately, a group of lawmakers seems intent on filibustering the bill to prevent it from passing. After more than five hours of debate on Monday, the bill was placed on hold. I hope we can eventually discuss the legislation's true merits and have a straightforward debate without the threat of a staged stall tactic. This bill puts in place exactly the kind of safeguards some in Washington want to dismantle, and it is worth the struggle to make a place for it in Missouri law.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. Because we are here to serve you, we look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

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