

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2009

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Erin Meyer (314) 531-7526, ext. 336
erin.meyer@ppslr.org

Missouri House of Representatives Priorities Way Out-of-Step **Legislators spend days on meaningless legislation to score political points with** **Missouri Right to Life**

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI — On February 11, after 2 days of debate, the Missouri House passed a resolution (HR294, 212) expressing dislike of the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). This resolution is non-binding and would send a message from the General Assembly to the President and U.S. Congress that anti-choice, anti-family planning legislators in Missouri oppose attempts to protect a woman's right to choose—even if her life or health is in danger.

The Freedom of Choice Act, which has not been reintroduced in Congress, seeks to codify the rights outlined in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision to protect a woman's reproductive health decisions.

While anti-abortion Missouri legislators seek to send a 'strong message' to politicians in Washington with these resolutions, they continue to ignore common-sense prevention bills at home that could actually reduce abortions: access to family planning services, and comprehensive sex education.

Missouri faces a \$300 million budget deficit, there are over 750,000 uninsured Missourians including 146,150 uninsured children. [[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)] Missouri's teen birth rate went up 6% in 2006 compared to a national average increase of 4%. [[Guttmacher Institute](#)] Missouri ranks among the top 15 states for sexually transmitted diseases – with St. Louis rating first in the nation for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia. [[CDC](#)] By contrast, Missouri has one of the lower abortion rates in the nation – ranking the 8th lowest state in the nation. [[Guttmacher Institute](#)]

And, despite these sobering statistics revealing serious health needs of Missouri children and families, the House Committee on Children and Families, chaired by Representative Cynthia Davis, has only taken up abortion-related bills this session including a hearing on two bills today (HB46 & HB434).

Special interest groups that support banning abortion and oppose family planning are trying to distract the public from the issues most important to getting our state and country back on track. Missourians know that our priority should be to ensure access to preventive health care and quality sex education for all Missourians. Unfortunately the Missouri House does not.

As the nation's leading advocate and provider of reproductive health services, Planned Parenthood knows that real sex education and birth control are the best tools for preventing unintended pregnancy and reducing the need for abortion. We are calling on our elected officials to put aside their differences, pass prevention legislation like the *Prevention First Act* and put the health of women and families first.

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Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri serve more than 71,000 women, men and teens annually with education, family planning, and disease testing and prevention services.