

Teen Endangerment: Redundant Misinformed Consent Procedures

[HB 1968](#) - [Rep. Anderson](#) (R-131 Springfield)

This bill creates a redundant “informed consent” procedure designed to delay access to abortion and shame young women into changing their minds.

This bill adds unnecessary steps to an already thorough “informed consent” process. Current law already dictates a strict informed consent process that must be completed in person at least 72 hours before any abortion services are provided, regardless of age. Current law also mandates that teens under age 18 get the consent of at least one parent before any abortion services are provided in Missouri. This measure requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to create a separate, redundant, and medically inaccurate “informed consent” process for teens and their consenting parents.

Consent procedures should support a young woman’s informed decision making, not shame or coerce her.

- A woman should have accurate information about all of her options.
- Information should support a woman, help her make a decision for herself, and enable her to take care of her own health and well-being. Information should not be provided with the intent of shaming, coercing, or making her change her mind.
- HB 1968 singles out teens; It forces a physician to provide a young woman with information intended to coerce and shame her into changing her mind.

Unfortunately, not all teens come from homes where good family communication is possible.

- Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers’ lives, and the good news is most teens do go to their parents when faced with an unintended pregnancy.
- However, some teens live with violent or abusive parents and do not feel safe telling their parents about a serious issue like an unintended pregnancy.
- No law can mandate healthy family communication. This measure could cause a scared teen to put her safety at risk or do something desperate that would endanger her health

Major medical organizations oppose forced parental involvement laws.

- Leading medical groups like the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association oppose parental consent and notification mandates.
- Research shows these laws neither increase parental involvement nor foster healthy communication. In fact, parental consent and notification mandates can be very detrimental to teens’ health and safety.

Measures like HB 1968 can come between a young woman and the health care she needs.

- This additional and unnecessary requirement could delay medical care, threatening a young woman’s health. It’s important to keep teens safe by opposing this bill.

Our legislators should focus on the root issue and invest in programs that prevent unintended pregnancy.

- If Missouri wants to reduce the need for abortion, we should focus on evidence-based methods to prevent unintended pregnancy like comprehensive, medically accurate sex education and access to contraception.
- The Missouri Legislature should focus on supporting young parents by expanding Medicaid, making child care affordable, and providing paid family leave.