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Planned Parenthood and ACLU Go to Court to Protect Access to Safe, Legal Abortion for Missourians

Kansas City, MO — Today, Comprehensive Health of Planned Parenthood Great Plains (PPGP), Reproductive Health Services of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region (RHS), and the ACLU of Missouri filed suit in state court to protect access to safe, legal abortion in Missouri. In their lawsuit, the nonprofits ask the court to block Senate Bill 5, a law recently passed during special session that severely restricts access to safe, legal abortion for Missourians.

In keeping with standards of medical practice, abortion providers already give all prospective patients full information about their options, medical procedures and risks, and all other information they need for voluntary, informed consent. This information is provided by a physician, nurse, or other qualified professional, and also given in writing. Missouri's onerous restrictions override good medical practice by requiring that women make two separate appointments with at least a 72-hour delay in between.

Now, Missouri legislators have piled on *yet another* restriction that provides no new information or benefits to women: it requires the very same physician who will later provide the abortion to also provide the mandated information at least 72 hours earlier. This will result in **extreme delays up to three to four weeks** for women to access abortion, and it will cut some women off from care entirely. Women in areas like Springfield will be forced to make a **300- to 400-mile round trip twice** to a health center that provides abortion, rather than making their initial visit at a local health center (as they could prior to this law).

Abortion is a time-sensitive procedure, and extreme delays like these will mean some people cannot access an abortion at all. These barriers are hardest on those who already face challenges to accessing care: young people, women of color, those who live in rural areas, and

people with low incomes. More than 70 percent of RHS patients have incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Planned Parenthood Great Plains Interim President and CEO Aaron Samulcek said:

“We all want women to have the information and support they need to make a decision about a pregnancy. Planned Parenthood health centers provide every woman with accurate information, counseling, and support to make personal medical decisions that are best for her health and well-being. This law is political interference at its worst. It will force women to wait weeks for an abortion, or take that decision away from her altogether.”

Reproductive Health Services of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region President and CEO Mary M. Kogut said:

“Let’s be clear: this law was written by politicians, not doctors, and is part of a broader effort to ban safe, legal abortion. Already, we talk to patients who have to delay their procedures to travel, take off time from work, and figure out child care. Adding a delay of three or four more weeks will mean many of these women cannot access abortion at all. We are in court today to ensure that every person, no matter who they are or where they live, can make their own personal health care decisions without political interference.”

ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project Deputy Director Talcott Camp said:

“Last year, the Supreme Court held that a woman should be able to get safe abortion care without needless delays or burdens and with respect and dignity. This Missouri law flies in the face of that ruling, disregards women’s health, and places politicians between a woman and her health care.”

ACLU of Missouri Executive Director Jeffrey A. Mittman said:

“Women have a constitutional right to a safe, legal abortion. We filed this lawsuit to protect Missouri women from laws that falsely claim to be in the interest of women’s health. In reality, this law harms women by making it more difficult to access abortion care. We know most Missourians support a woman’s right to make private health decisions with her doctor and her family.”

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