

HCS HBs 1307 & 1313 -- WAITING PERIOD FOR ABORTIONS

SPONSOR: Elmer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 8 to 3.

Currently, there is a minimum 24-hour waiting period before a woman can have an abortion. This bill increases the minimum waiting period to 72 hours.

The bill specifies that if the provisions requiring a 72-hour waiting period for an abortion are ever temporarily or permanently restrained or enjoined by judicial order, the waiting period for an abortion must be 24 hours; provided, however, that if the temporary or permanent restraining order or injunction is stayed or dissolved, or otherwise ceases to have effect, the waiting period for an abortion must be 72 hours.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bills protect a woman when she is making a difficult and life-changing decision. Very rarely does someone find out about a medical issue and then make an immediate decision on how to treat the issue and the bills help ensure that a woman is not making a rushed decision for something so important. A woman is legally required to be given substantial amounts of information when receiving a consultation for an abortion, the bills give a woman more time to go over the information and fully understand the information she is provided.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Elmer and Frederick; Missouri Family Policy Council; Jenny Slawson and Leslie Kerns, Pregnancy Help Center of Central Missouri; Campaign Life Missouri; Missouri Family Network; and Joanne Schrader.

OPPONENTS: Opponents say the bills force a woman to further delay a medical procedure she has elected to undergo. A woman has the ability to make decisions on her own and doesn't need the legislature dictating how long she needs to think about a decision she makes. Making a woman wait longer for a medical procedure she has decided she wants or needs is cruel and unusual. Opponents say the bills violate federal law.

Testifying against the bill were ACLU of Eastern Missouri; Susan Gibson; NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri; Reverend Rebecca Turner, Faith Aloud; and Dina van der Zalm.