



## Missouri House of Representatives

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### **State Rep. Tara Peters and State Senator Patty Lewis File Companion Bills to Expand Women's Health Care Access**

**JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.** – State Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla) and State Senator Patty Lewis (D-Kansas City) have filed companion bills for the 2025 legislative session aimed at significantly improving women's access to quality health care services in Missouri.

The legislation, hailed as a “game changer for women's health care” by a Missouri House colleague in 2024, narrowly missed passage last year. Rep. Peters and Sen. Lewis are optimistic that renewed efforts in 2025 will send the bills to the governor's desk for signature.

Rep. Peters' **House Bill 398** and Sen. Lewis' **Senate Bill 178** propose:

- Updating state mammogram notices.
- Expanding access to contraception.
- Ensuring health care facilities are equipped for sexual assault forensic exams.
- Addressing and preventing sexually transmitted infections, including congenital syphilis, which has seen a sharp rise in Missouri.

In 2024, **House Bill 2413**—a bipartisan effort combining provisions from both parties—failed to secure final passage despite widespread support. The bill was co-sponsored by numerous representatives and backed by organizations such as the State Medical Association and the Rural Health Association.

“This bill should already be law,” Rep. Peters said. “A large, bipartisan group of us worked on it because the need and value is clear and undeniable. I'm thrilled to have Sen. Lewis in the Senate chamber this year so we can finally make this a reality for Missouri.”

Sen. Lewis emphasized the urgency of the issue. “We have to reduce congenital syphilis rates and improve maternal-child health in Missouri,” she said. “This legislation is a bipartisan win for everyone.”

Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City), a co-sponsor of the 2024 bill, highlighted the collaborative nature of the effort. “Good policy comes from ideas on both sides of the aisle,” he said.

Both bills have taken their first steps in the legislative process. HB 398 has been second read in the House, while SB 178 has been first read in the Senate.

*Representative Tara Peters, a Republican, represents Phelps County (District 122) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first term in November 2022. For more information, please contact Rep. Peters’ office at 573-751-1446 or at [Tara.Peters@House.Mo.Gov](mailto:Tara.Peters@House.Mo.Gov).*

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