

HJR 18 -- AFFIRMING LIFE

SPONSOR: Moon

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 7 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 4.

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment declares that the term "person" under the Missouri Constitution includes every human being, including every unborn human child at every stage of biological development from the moment of conception until birth. The amendment declares that nothing in the Constitution of Missouri secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion.

This bill is similar to HJR 98 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that all persons have the right to a pursuit of liberty and the gains of the pursuit of happiness but the right to life isn't a given right currently. The right to life occurs at personhood and personhood occurs at conception. Medical advances since the decision in Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 133 (1973), require revisiting the issue of personhood.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Moon; Denise Moon; Jerry Mercier; Joan E. Blatt; Karen Nixon; Lois Hogan; Mary Staggs; Ron Staggs; Lara Tipton; Kathy Forck; Bonnie Lie; Payten Knapp; Mackenzi Knapp; Joanne Schrader; Maddison Knapp; Preston Knapp; Verita Hayden; Frank Rybak; Jay Rybak; Nora Stockman; Sherry Kuttenkuler; Ken Hurley; Jeff Rakenstraw; Alden Redfield; and Ike Skelton.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that personhood amendments are clearly trying to make abortion illegal and federal courts would most certainly declare them to be unconstitutional. This proposal would also encompass in vitro fertilization, some forms of contraception, and stem cell research as being illegal activities. This is an extreme and dangerous intrusion into the relationship a woman has with her medical professionals.

Testifying against the bill were NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri; American Civil Liberties Union; and Planned Parenthood Advocates.