



# News Release

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:      P: 573.635.7239      F: 573.635.7431  
600 Clark Avenue, P.O. Box 1022, Jefferson City, MO, 65102-1022  
mocatholic@mocatholic.org      www.MOcatholic.org

## **Bill Protecting Conscience Rights of Health Care Workers Passes House**

March 12, 2013 JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Today the Missouri House of Representatives passed a bill protecting the conscience rights of health care providers. House Bill 457, sponsored by House Speaker Tim Jones (R-Eureka), provides health care workers the right to opt out of providing medical care in certain circumstances when to do so would violate their religious or moral convictions.

The bill expands Missouri law, which currently allows health care providers to opt out of participating in abortion, by permitting them to opt out of participating in contraception, sterilization procedures that are not medically necessary, embryonic stem cell research, assisted reproduction, and fetal tissue experimentation.

The bill would require medical professionals to provide “reasonable notice” of their intent not to participate in these procedures, and would prevent them from withholding emergency medical treatment or services necessary to save the life of the patient. “The bill represents an effort to balance the rights of the patient to receive care with the right of the healthcare worker not to have to participate in procedures that they find objectionable,” said Missouri Catholic Conference General Counsel Tyler McClay.

Health care workers asserting these conscience rights could not be discriminated against, and can seek legal recourse in the event that these rights are violated. Speaking in favor of the bill, House Speaker Jones said that this bill protects conscience rights that are and have always been “sacrosanct” in America, rights that many came to this country from the very beginning to be able to claim.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 116-41, with members from both sides of the aisle voting in favor of it. House Bill 457 now moves to the Senate for consideration where a companion bill - Senate Bill 84 sponsored by Scott Rupp (R-O’Fallon) - was voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday night by a vote of 5-2.