

Good News

Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri | March/April 2019



First Half of 2019 Legislative Session Marked by Pro-life Proposals

Following Spring Break, the Missouri General Assembly has returned to the State Capitol to further consider legislation after already passing nearly 100 bills in the first three months of session. One policy area that has seen significant legislative activity is law relating to abortion; numerous bills have been filed in both the House and Senate that would grant further protections for the unborn and their mothers. Now that we've reached the halfway point of the legislative session, we've compiled a helpful overview of the multiple pro-life bills that have been introduced.

Parental Notification

[HB 127](#), sponsored by [Rocky Miller \(R-Lake Ozark\)](#), and [SB 106](#), sponsored by [Sen. Denny Hoskins \(R-Warrensburg\)](#), would require a parent who is giving consent for a minor to obtain an abortion to provide written notice of the planned abortion to the other custodial parent of the child.

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Informed Consent

[HB 282](#), sponsored by [Rep. Sonya Anderson \(R-Springfield\)](#), and [SB 420](#), sponsored by [Sen. Jeanie Riddle \(R-Mokane\)](#), would require Missouri's informed consent information to be provided to women referred to an out-of-state abortion provider. This informational material must currently be provided to all those seeking an abortion in Missouri.

Selective Abortions

[HB 771](#), sponsored by [Rep. Shamed Dogan \(R-Ballwin\)](#), would prohibit abortions based on sex, race, or Down Syndrome.

Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

[HB 680](#), sponsored by [Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman \(R-Arnold\)](#), would prohibit abortions after 20 weeks – the time at which an unborn child can feel pain. The Senate version, [SB 279](#), sponsored by [Sen. Bob Onder \(R - Lake St. Louis\)](#), has since been amended to include other pro-life provisions (see below).

Heartbeat Bill

[SB 139](#), sponsored by [Sen. Andrew Koenig \(R - Manchester\)](#), would prohibit abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can be as early as six weeks depending on the method used. [HB 126](#), sponsored by [Rep. Nick Schroer \(R-O'Fallon\)](#), would also prohibit abortions after a fetal heartbeat, but has since been amended to include numerous other pro-life provisions (see below).

“Trigger Law”

[SB 345](#), also sponsored by [Sen. Andrew Koenig \(R - Manchester\)](#), is a “trigger law” that would outlaw all abortions in Missouri, except in cases of medical emergency, at such time that the Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, or amends the Constitution to give states the right to fully regulate abortions.

Born-Alive Infant Protection Act

[SB 388](#), sponsored by [Sen. Eric Burlison \(R-Battlefield\)](#), and [HB 971](#), sponsored by [Rep. Doug Richey \(R-Excelsior Springs\)](#), would establish penalties for any person who knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence, causes the death of a child born alive during an attempted abortion.

Though nothing is certain, it appears that HB 126 and SB 279 will be the bills to watch in the second half of the session. During its debate in the House, other pro-life amendments were added to HB 126, encompassing many of the bills discussed above. The current version of HB 126, now referred to as the “Missouri Stands for the Unborn Act,” includes parental notification, informed consent for out-of-state abortion referrals, a ban on selective abortions, the pain-capable and heartbeat bans, and the trigger law outlawing nearly all abortions if *Roe* is overturned. HB 126 was passed by the House and is now awaiting a hearing and debate in the Senate. Likewise, SB 279 was amended in committee to also include SBs 139 (heartbeat bill) and 345 (trigger law).

The MCC will continue to monitor these and other pro-life bills, and will update our MOCAN members as the bills make their way through the General Assembly.



MOCAN

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Criminal Justice Reform on the Move in Missouri



After years of rising prison populations and a get-tough approach to crime, things are beginning to change in Missouri; state leaders in Missouri are finally taking prison reform seriously. Reform began with the Justice Reinvestment Task Force, which was convened by executive order in 2017. This task force made an independent analysis of Missouri's corrections and criminal justice landscape to help identify prison population factors and to develop recommendations on how to reduce numbers in overcrowded state prisons. Their research led them to conclude that Missouri, with over 33,000 inmates, had the 8th highest incarceration rate and the largest growth in female prison population in the country.

Missouri was faced with the reality of the need to build two new prisons by 2020—at a cost of \$485 million. This shocking realization spurred people into action. In response, the 2018 General Assembly passed legislation

for community-based mental services for people on state supervision, as well as changes to the Board of Probation and Parole to better facilitate the parole of inmates. In September 2018, Governor Parson convened a special session to address treatment courts. The bill, approved by the legislature, made it easier to establish courts in jurisdictions without treatment courts. This year's state budget includes money for the expansion.

Governor Parson continued the reform effort in his 2019 State of the State address, when he spoke about the importance of re-entry programs and alternative sentences. "We need to be more efficient in these programs so we truly offer a second chance," he said. "And as Governor, I am not interested in building more prisons." He went on to identify a plan to consolidate the operations at Crossroads Correctional Center and Western Missouri prisons in an effort to conserve funds.

Now, the General Assembly is considering even more changes. Numerous bills have been filed including the Fresh Start Act (HB 564), which gives ex-offenders an easier path to get professional licenses in order to work, HB 352, which gives early parole to inmates over 65, and HB 113, which gives judges discretion to deviate from mandatory minimum sentences in certain cases. These bills have passed the House and are awaiting action in the Senate. In addition, the House Special Committee on Criminal Justice announced that they were introducing HCB 2, mirrored after the First Step Act, which was signed into federal law last year. The bill, called the Missouri First Step Act, is a comprehensive criminal justice reform package. The omnibus bill includes a ban on shackling of pregnant inmates, would eliminate the practice of jailing people who owe counties for room and board assessed during incarceration, and would give ex-felons the opportunity to work in restaurants and grocery stores that sell alcohol or lottery tickets.

These reforms are welcome and consistent with Catholic social teaching. As the Bishops said in their 2000 statement, *Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*, "We are guided by the paradoxical Catholic teaching on crime and punishment: We will not tolerate the crime and violence that threatens the lives and dignity of our sisters and brothers, and we will not give up on those who have lost their way. We seek both justice and mercy."



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Introducing the 2019 Annual Assembly Keynote Speaker, Mr. David Bereit

David Bereit started and led the global 40 Days for Life movement through its first decade, building it into the largest grassroots pro-life mobilization in the world. Through its network of more than 2,000 local leaders and 750,000 volunteers in 816 cities across all 50 American states and 56 nations, 40 Days for Life has helped to save 15,256 children's lives, bring 186 workers out of the abortion industry, and close 99 abortion centers. David recently stepped away from his role as CEO of 40 Days for Life, and today he coaches and mentors ministry leaders and serves as strategic advisor to numerous high-impact ministry organizations. Along with his wife, Margaret, David is helping FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) develop its Love Life initiative, providing pro-life formation and marriage support for missionaries across America. David is a sought-after speaker, media spokesperson, and bestselling author. Most importantly, David is a Catholic Christian, husband, and father.



 **40 DAYS FOR LIFE™**