

Hawaii Family Forum (HFF) MEMOs

March 6, 2001

URGENT ALERT!

**Contact your legislators
and urge them to OPPOSE
all forms of legalized
gambling! Pro-gambling
forces are working hard –so
please express your view!!!**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit,
pro-family education organization
committed to preserving and strengthening
families in Hawaii.

While locally governed and supported,
HFF is associated with Dr. James Dobson's
Focus on the Family.

As a non-profit organization,
gifts to HFF are tax deductible.
(And Appreciated!)

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Age of Consent Bills Still Alive

Despite strong opposition from Honolulu Prosecutor Peter Carlisle, Kapiolani's Sex Abuse Treatment Center and a multitude of so-called 'women's groups', House and Senate bills raising Hawaii's age of consent are still alive in the 2001 legislature.

Both HB236 and SB711 made it through their respective House and Senate Committees and crossed over to the other chamber.

In the House of Representatives

To the surprise of many, the House Judiciary Committee March 2 passed HB236, which would raise Hawaii's age of consent to 16 and prohibit sex between 14 and 15 year old minors and adults who are 5 years or more older. House Judiciary Committee Chair Eric Hamakawa is on record opposing an increase in the age of consent. Nevertheless, strong support from a majority of both the Democrats and Republicans appears to have propelled the measure forward.

In the Senate

On the Senate side, the Senate is expected to pass SB711, which in its most recent form was amended to raise the age of consent to 15, thereby extending legal protection only to 14 year olds, if the adult is 19 or older. Under this latest version, it would remain legal for adults of any age to have sex with 15 year old minors.

Issue Headed for Conference Committee

The differences in approach means the issue will not finally be resolved until the end of the legislative session in a conference committee. During conference committee negotiations, key lawmakers from both the House and Senate meet to work out remaining differences in a proposal.

Public MUST Stay Involved

The differences also mean it is more important than ever for legislators to continue hearing from their constituents.

Because of the strong opposition to raising the age of consent coming from powerful lobbyists and key legislators, there will be strong pressure to kill the proposal through behind the scenes procedural maneuvering. This maneuvering is how the 'parental notification for abortion' bill was recently killed. (see abortion, page 2) So, please stay involved as we keep you posted on the latest development

Not out of the Woods on Gambling

You'll hear it in the press. You'll hear it in the halls of the capitol and you'll hear it when you contact your legislator:

“The legislature is not going to legalize gambling this year.”

Not so fast.

While on the surface it appears the gambling issue is dead for the 2001 legislative session, there is still significant pro-gambling activity taking place behind the scenes.

The Hawaii Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (of which HFF is a part) is urging the public to stay involved on the issue.

Pro-gambling forces have been taking out full page advertisements in the newspaper praising the notion of so-called 'limited casino gambling.' ”

What they don't tell you is that 'limited casino gambling' very quickly becomes widespread casino gambling and brings with it a host of negative economic and social consequences.

Pro-gambling forces are also push-polling Hawaii residents, asking them to support limited casino gambling and then patching them directly through to their legislators. Some legislators have expressed outrage at the practice.

Bottom line: Stay involved. Contact your legislators and ask them to say NO to commercial gambling in Hawaii. Then, spread the word.

Reversing Earlier Action, Parental Notification for Abortion Bill Killed

In a bizarre move on March 2, the Senate Judiciary Committee reversed its earlier action and killed SB809, a bill requiring parental notification for minors' abortions.

Five committee members were responsible for killing the measure when they sent a written letter asking Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Brian Kanno asking for the committee to reconsider its earlier decision. Senator Kanno granted their request and the bill is now dead.

The same five Senators who asked for the reconsideration then voted to hold (or kill) the proposal. Those five Senators were:

- **Senator Carol Fukunaga;**
- **Senator Colleen Hanabusa;**
- **Senator Les Ihara;**
- **Senator Bob Nakata; and,**
- **Senator Russell Kokubun.**

Four Senators opposed reversing the committee's earlier support for the bill. These four Senators voted in favor of parental notification for a minor daughter's abortion. They included:

- Senator Brian Kanno;
- Senator David Matsuura;
- Senator Jonathon Chun; and,
- Senator Sam Slom.

The reconsideration occurred after Family Planning Centers of Hawaii (formerly Planned Parenthood) hired Louise Ing to issue a written legal opinion. To the surprise of no one, this lawyer for the abortion clinics alleged the bill was unconstitutional. The five pro-abortion Senators used the opinion as the justification for reversing the earlier vote.

However, Ms. Ing's opinion was simply that: one legal opinion. Rebuttal arguments can be made for each of her claims. Unfortunately, those rebuttal arguments were not heard during the committee's reconsideration deliberations.

Due to this action, this issue appears dead for the 2001 legislative session. Parental notification supporters in the House were waiting for the bill to first pass the Senate. As that now appears impossible, debate in the House will not occur this year.