

Hawaii Family Forum

Monthly MEMOs

March 6, 2001

2001 Legislative Update

Good & Bad News on the Pro-Family Front

Age of Consent Bills Still Alive

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 minors 14 or 15 with an adult 5 years or more older.

On the Senate side, the Senate will be passing SB711, a bill raising the age of consent to 15, thereby extending legal protection only to 14 year olds, if the adult is 19 or older.

We must continue to encourage legislators to raise the age to 16 and to make this issue a priority during the 2001 legislative session.

SB711 and HB236 continue to face strong opposition from Honolulu Prosecutor Peter Carlisle, the Sex Abuse Treatment Center and a multitude of so-called 'women's groups'. **As a result, it is imperative legislators continue to hear from their constituents.**

Parental Notification for Abortion Killed when Senate Judiciary Committee Reverses its Earlier Action

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 Louis Ing to issue a written legal opinion. To the surprise of no one, the 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 appears impossible.

Gambling Not Dead Yet – Please Stay Involved

Despite all the assurances to the contrary, gambling opponents MUST continue to let their voices be heard. Pro-gambling forces are active, both behind the scenes and in the press. They have purchased full-page ads extolling the benefits of 'limited casino gambling'. They are also conducting push-polls of Hawaii residents. In push polling, the questioner will seek to connect you directly to your legislator and urge you to tell them to support limited casino gambling.