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# State Senate Passes Abortion Legislation

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JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate gave first round approval last week to a measure sponsored by the area’s state senator that would change provisions in the state’s abortion laws.

In an overwhelming voice vote, the Senate affirmed a bill that would make it a felony to perform an abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy unless the mother's life or health was threatened, or the fetus is determined to be non-viable. The bill simultaneously stiffens the requirements to legally meet these conditions. State Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, sponsored the bill.  
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“Protecting the sanctity of life has been, and will remain, one of my top priorities while serving in the Missouri General Assembly,” said Mayer. “As a lawmaker, I strive each and every day to provide a voice for those who do not yet have one to share.”

The legislation would, with the exception of a medical emergency, require the physician to determine the gestational age of the unborn child before performing an abortion. If the doctor determines the baby is 20 weeks or more, the physician would test for viability. If viable, no abortion could be performed unless it is necessary to preserve the life of the woman.

If the unborn child is 20 weeks or more, not determined viable, and an abortion is

performed, the bill requires the doctor to submit a report to the Department of Health and Senior Services.

“At 20 weeks, a baby is approximately the length of a banana, she can hear sounds and even covers her ears with her hands if things are too noisy, and her twisting, turning, punching and kicking movements can start to be felt by the mother,” said Mayer. “State law already requires mothers to be informed about other alternatives to abortion.”

Penalties for violating the provisions of this bill would include a Class C felony, and physicians who plead guilty to or are convicted of performing or inducing an abortion in violation of this act could be subject to having their license to practice medicine in Missouri suspended for three years.

Also, any hospital or ambulatory surgical center that knowingly violates this act could be subject to suspension or revocation of its license.

The bill must receive a second vote of approval before advancing to the House for similar consideration.

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