

Panel weighs mandatory warning on abortion

Proposal could let pharmacists obey conscience

By DEANNA MARTIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Clinics would have to inform women seeking abortions that life begins at conception and that a fetus may feel pain under a contentious abortion bill that some

"To me this is the human rights issue of our day. We have a duty to protect the least among us."

Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel on new bill require providers to inform women seeking abortions that their fetus may feel pain

lawmakers are trying to revive.

The new version might also include a "pharmacist conscience clause" that would allow pharmacists to refuse to distribute certain medications, such as emergency contraception, if doing so

goes against their beliefs.

A conference committee of House and Senate members met Wednesday to try to resolve differences between their versions of the bill.

The Senate version does not

include the House provisions that women be informed of life at conception and fetal pain, but it would make clinics tell them about adoption options.

Rep. Tim Harris, a Republican from Marion who sponsored the bill, said he favored the House version with the Senate adoption language added.

If the conference committee reaches an agreement, the legislation would move to the full Senate and House for consideration.

"To me this is the human rights issue of our day," said Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel.

"We have a duty to protect

the least among us."

But abortion-rights advocates said such legislation tramples on religious freedom and dictates what doctors must tell their patients.

Lindsey Mintz, director of government affairs for the Jewish Community Relations Council, said only some Christians believe that life begins at conception, while other Christians and Jews do not.

"It's making a legal fact out of a religious belief," Mintz said. "It would deal a serious blow to religious liberty in this state."

Michael McKillip, of Planned

Parenthood of Indiana, said doctors seem to agree that it is feasible that a fetus may feel pain after 20 weeks gestation, but there is no consensus about pain earlier than that.

"We need to leave these decisions to the medical community," he said.

Arkansas, Georgia and Minnesota inform women that a fetus may feel pain, but those states specify that it applies to fetuses at 20 weeks gestation or later.

Indiana would become the first state to tell all women seeking abortions that fetuses may feel pain.

Hoosier lawmakers hit crunch time

By MIKE SMITH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Lawmakers are trying to reach consensus on several bills, including those that would place stronger restrictions on child molesters and government use of eminent domain, as they close in on a Tuesday deadline for adjourning the regular session.



GARTON

They did give final legislative approval to some bills Wednesday, however.

The Senate agreed to House changes to a bill that would allow courts to seize a drunken driver's vehicle if the person has at least two prior convictions for operating while intoxicated within the previous five years. The bill now goes to Gov. Mitch Daniels for consideration.

The Senate also approved legislation that would make it a felony instead of a misdemeanor for giving false information to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to apply for a driver's license or state ID card. That bill is also headed to Daniels' desk.

Dozens of people have been charged in recent years in connection with illegal licenses and

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Robert Garton, R-Columbus Senate President Pro Tem, on compromise of Major Moves

ID cards, and prosecutors say thousands might have used bogus visas, passports and other immigration documents to obtain licenses and IDs at Indiana license branches.

The House gave a final nod to a bill designed to curb road rage by making aggressive driving a specific crime. It would define aggressive driving as having committed at least three of nine acts during one continuous episode of driving.

The actions include following too closely, unsafe stopping or slowing, unnecessary honking or repeatedly flashing headlights.

The House also approved a bill that would create a license plate with the saying "In God We Trust."

Lawmakers were still trying to refine several bills that would place more restrictions on convicted child molesters.

One proposed compromise would require anyone age 18 or above who molests or commits

certain other sex crimes against someone under age 14 to be placed on lifetime parole and wear electronic monitoring devices once released from custody.

Other provisions still alive would prohibit certain convicted sex offenders from living within 1,000 feet of schools, parks or youth centers.

Negotiations also continued Wednesday on a bill that would restrict most government units in Indiana from seizing property and transferring it to private entities.

The bill's author, Republican Rep. David Wolkins of Winona Lake, said some differences remained unresolved but predicted that core parts of the legislation would pass.

Meanwhile, the leader of the Senate said Wednesday that he would advise against Daniels calling a special session if lawmakers were unable to pass a compromise version of his Major Moves highway plan by the deadline.

"If you can't resolve it within these next few days, I'm not sure you can resolve it" in a legislative overtime, said Senate President Pro Tem Robert Garton, R-Columbus.

Daniels has said he is confident a compromise will be reached on time.

BRIEFS

STATE

INDIANAPOLIS

Highway promotion funded by engineers, contractors

Engineering, construction and other interests that stand to gain from the Major Moves highway initiative have contributed more than \$300,000 to a nonprofit group that promotes the plan and other parts of Gov. Mitch Daniels' agenda, a report published Wednesday said.

Aiming Higher Inc., created in 2005 with private contributions remaining from Daniels' transition and inauguration, is paying \$60,000 for last-minute television ads promoting Major Moves.

Aiming Higher, as a nonprofit, is not subject to the state's campaign finance laws and has more freedom to raise money, and corporations can give as much as they want.

Inspector General David Thomas, the state's chief ethics officer, said he was unfamiliar with Aiming Higher and could not comment on whether it was appropriate to solicit donations from contractors who stand to profit.

BLOOMINGTON

IU AIDS center wins \$1.2M in federal funding

An Indiana University center that strives to stop the spread of AIDS in rural areas will receive more than \$1 million in federal

funding to continue its research.

For its commitment to the issue, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will give The Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention \$1.2 million over the next five years.

The center began in 1994, and as of this month, became a joint project with the University of Colorado and the University of Kentucky.

INDIANAPOLIS

Poll: Many unsure of Indiana's economic future

Nearly one-third of Indiana residents are not confident they would be better off financially in a year, and more are uncertain about their economic futures than they were two years ago, a new poll shows.

The poll was conducted from Feb. 28 to March 2 by Selzer & Co. of Des Moines, Iowa, for an Indianapolis newspaper. Of the 501 adults surveyed, 31 percent said they weren't confident about their economic futures, compared to 25 percent in January 2005.

Big layoffs planned by domestic automakers and their parts suppliers, including Delphi and Dana, have helped fuel the pessimism, the poll showed.

The poll found that 67 percent of those employed felt they did not need to worry about downsizing or their company going out of business, similar to views two years ago.

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