

Health Access & Privacy Alliance 2008 Annual Report  
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Despite early speculation that property taxes would be the sole focus of the General Assembly during the short session, the Health Access & Privacy Alliance (HAPA) remained quite busy monitoring anti-choice legislation.

Sen. Jeff Drozda's (R-Westfield) SB's 3 and 146 made it out of the Senate, but were never heard in the House. SB3 would have allowed pharmacists the right to refuse selling or dispensing "a drug or medical device used to cause an abortion." Although not classified as an abortifacient by the FDA, this bill specifically targeted Emergency Contraception. SB146 inserted fetal pain and "life begins at conception" language into the informed consent script all women are read upon procuring an abortion. SB146 would also have required that abortion providers have hospital privileges in the county or adjacent county to where an abortion is performed. Since it is unlikely hospitals would grant privileges to these doctors, who often travel to multiple counties/clinics, SB146 would have effectively closed down Indiana's nine abortion clinics. (Late in the session, Senator's Drozda and Miller tried inserting the language of these bills into other pieces of legislation, most notably HB1172 – a medical profession bill related to emergency volunteers. Sen. Long ruled the amendments non-germane. Rep. Tim Brown again tried to amend hospital privilege language into the bill when it reached conference committee, but was not successful.)

SB187 (Sen. Drozda) would mandate school corporations teach fetal development in their health classes. This bill passed the Senate and its language was amended onto HB1107, a cultural competency bill authored by Rep. Greg Porter (D-Indianapolis). As of this writing, SB187 is in conference committee where Rep. Porter is fighting to have Sen. Drozda's amendment removed. HB1107 will likely die in committee unless Rep. Porter can amend its original language into another bill. Another bill HAPA monitored late in the session, and which has not been heard in committee as of this writing, is SB143. Rep. Walorski successfully inserted language in SB143, a childhood lead poisoning prevention bill, mandating lead inspections for abortion clinics. This language was ultimately removed.

In addition to these bills, many "poison pill" amendments were attached to an assortment of bills in both the Senate and House. Poison pills are amendments meant to kill a bill; HAPA monitored all abortion-related poison pill amendments. Poison pill amendments killed bills related to health insurance, emergency health practitioners, and bias crimes. These kinds of amendments were primarily offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski, Rep. Marlin Stutzman, Rep. Eric Turner, and Rep. Jeff Thompson. Rep. Thompson alone offered poison pill amendments to at least eight bills in the final days of the session.

Not all of HAPA's work focused on monitoring anti-choice legislation, however. "Prevention First" legislation was offered. Sen. Vi Simpson (D-Bloomington) sponsored a birth control protection bill; Sen. Sue Errington (D-Muncie) sponsored a pharmacy patient protection act; Sen. Jean Breaux (D-Indianapolis) sponsored a parent's right to

know/notice home on sexual education bill; and Sen. Karen Tallian (D-Portage) sponsored a bill mandating medically accurate information be given to students. These bills were assigned to Senate committees, but never heard. Regardless, HAPA and the League are quite pleased the “Prevention First” message is beginning to be heard.

Lastly, HAPA encourages all Leaguers interested in reproductive rights and women’s health to consider becoming Capitol Activists. When HAPA-monitored legislation is up for a committee hearing or vote, Capitol Activists are encouraged to come to the Statehouse wearing a “Prevention Now” t-shirt which can be provided with advance notice. It’s important that pro-choice, pro-women’s health advocates be seen in the General Assembly. (And, of course, remember to ask about women’s reproductive health when you attend candidate forums and debates!)