



To: Friends of Sarah

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Re: Sarah's Law – Parental Rights in protecting minors from Secret Abortions

California Proposition 4, "The Child and Teen Safety and Stop Predators Act: Sarah's Law," is a constitutionally sound initiative that protects both parental rights and the well-being of adolescents.

Sarah's Law would move California out of the current status quo where sexual predators can use secret abortion to conceal the sexual exploitation of minors. It also addresses California's compelling interest in protecting adolescents from the known risks of secret abortion, including the danger of not obtaining prompt care for health- and life-threatening complications when a minor's parents are unaware of a secret abortion.

Sarah's Law would establish significant protections for parental rights. The status quo in California is that parents have absolutely no right to be notified concerning surgical or drug-induced abortions performed on their adolescent daughters. Sarah's Law would require that a parent receive notice from the abortion provider at least 48 hours before the abortion.

Previous parental involvement initiatives in California were defeated when opponents focused their campaign on the specter of girls from abusive homes being harmed. Therefore, the proponents of Sarah's Law included a provision that an alternative "adult family member" may be notified, but only if the minor provides a written statement that she has been subject to a pattern of physical, sexual, or severe emotional abuse and that abuse is reported by the doctor to the appropriate authorities. Parental involvement laws in several other states also provide for notification of other non-parent family members in certain circumstances. The limitations on alternative family member notification in Sarah's Law will still ensure that most parents are informed if their daughter is seeking an abortion.

Sarah's law would bring California law in line with the approximately 35 other States who have laws protecting parental involvement in situations where underage daughters are at risk due to the dangers of sexual predators and secret abortions.

*This memo is for purposes of legal analysis and public education only.*