

# **TALKING POINTS ON PARENTAL NOTICE**

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*These talking points on Parental Notice are broken down into seven key arguments, each followed by several supporting points.*

## **1. Parental Notice laws protect minor girls from their own inexperience and lack of mature judgment.**

Neurologists confirm that teens brains are still in the process of maturing. Their capacity for decision making, especially in high-risk behavior, is not equal to that of an adult.

Our laws acknowledge that teens do not recognize all the consequences of their decisions and actions. In our two-tier justice system, teens are not punished as stringently for their crimes. They deserve the same consideration when it comes to decisions like abortion.

Like any surgical procedure, abortion can be dangerous and post-abortive women must be closely monitored after the procedure. Studies have shown that teens are much less likely to attend follow-up appointments without parental involvement.

Teens are not as fully informed of their own medical history and special concerns as their parents are. They may fail to provide crucial information, like allergies or family medical history—things that parents would not overlook, increasing the risk of complications.

Parental Notice is supported by upwards of 75% of voters nationwide. The vast majority of Americans -- and Illinoisans -- recognize the wisdom of such a measure.

## **2. Abortion carries many physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences, especially for minor girls, contrary to the claims of abortion supporters.**

Surgical abortions early in pregnancy can be dangerous; the doctor may damage the cervix or puncture the uterus when removing the fetus from the uterine wall. The small fetus may not be completely removed, leading to infection.

The abortion pill RU486, generally used in the first trimester, can have many dangerous side effects, including pain, diarrhea, bone marrow depression, anemia, liver damage and heavy bleeding.

Women who abort run higher risks of future infertility, miscarriages, ectopic pregnancy, low birth weight and premature birth of future children.

Abortion is an identified risk factor in breast cancer. The risk for teens may be even greater, since they will not likely have reaped the protective effect of previously giving birth.

Women who have abortions are also at a higher risk of psychological and social problems, including drug and alcohol abuse, increased sexual promiscuity, depression and suicide.

### **3. In order to exercise their duty to provide for the medical needs of their children, parents need to know if a minor daughter receives an abortion.**

In nearly every area other than abortion, our laws recognize the need for parents to be informed about any medical procedure a minor child receives—even something as simple as pierced ears or an aspirin at school.

In nearly every case, parents must consent to a medical procedure for a child. We're talking here about merely notifying parents—a truly modest measure.

Abortion clinics in Illinois are less regulated than other outpatient surgical facilities. This makes it all the more crucial that parents be informed about a minor daughter's abortion.

If parents are not informed about a daughter's abortion, their ability to respond to any of the possible physical or psychological harms of abortion is severely undermined.

To deprive parents of even knowing about a daughter's abortion severely undermines parental authority and the integrity of the family, the basic and most inviolable unit of society.

### **4. Parental Notice protects minor girls from predators and the unscrupulous abortion providers.**

Too often the “good reason” a minor girl doesn't want her parents to know about an abortion is that she is with someone she shouldn't be—like a predatory older man. Parents need to know about such dangerous—and often illegal—relationships.

Sexual predators will very often pressure girls into having abortions to cover their tracks. Girls feel pressured to do so to please the predator or to keep their relationship a secret. The only one “benefitting” from the abortion is the sexual predator.

Planned Parenthood is notorious for hiding child sexual predators, even coaching minor girls how to obtain abortions without disclosing statutory rape. Parental Notice provides one more legal stopgap to protect minor girls from predators, since Planned Parenthood won't.

Planned Parenthood brought in over \$100 million from abortion in their last fiscal year. Abortion profits are a major disincentive for abortion providers like Planned Parenthood to disclose the risks of abortion.

A minor girl needs someone with her best interests at heart—not the older man abusing her or the abortion provider taking her money—to help her assess those risks. In the vast majority of cases, that's her parents.

**5. Contrary to opponents claims, Parental Notice does not force girls to disclose their pregnancy to abusive parents, and risk personal harm.**

The Parental Notice law provides a judicial bypass system, allowing an impartial judge to assess a minor girl's personal situation and whether she must inform parents of her abortion.

If a girl is being abused, the Parental Notice system, including this judicial bypass, may be the key for her to get out of that situation and finally get some help.

Planned Parenthood admits that of the 39% of girls who do not tell a parent about their abortions, the vast majority have no fear for their safety.

Many minor girls have exaggerated fears about how their parents will react to learning about their pregnancy. Parental Notice protects girls truly in danger of abuse through the judicial bypass system, while protecting other girls from being harmed by unwarranted fears.

**6. Parental Notice is not about fostering parent-child communication. It's about protecting children by giving parents information they need.**

Opponents of Parental Notice claim that these laws cannot foster or restore parent-child communication, but that's not the point. The point of Parental Notice is to give parents vital medical information about a child whose health they are responsible for.

Even if Planned Parenthood's statistics are true and 61% of minor girls talk to their parents about abortion, that leaves 39% who don't. That's tens of thousands of girls whose parents are being left in the dark about their abortions and all the risks involved.

Many minor girls have exaggerated fears about how their parents will react to learning about their pregnancy. Without Parental Notice, these unwarranted fears deprive girls of the chance to get help and support from parents capable—as most parents are—of providing help and support.

**7. Opponents of Parental Notice make contradictory claims about the effect of Parental Notice on abortion for minor girls.**

We are told by opponents of Parental Notice that such measures have no effect on teen abortion, and yet we're also told by those same opponents that they increase second trimester abortion rates. Which is it?

We are told by opponents of Parental Notice that second trimester abortions are much more dangerous than first trimester abortions, yet we are also told by these same opponents, elsewhere, that second trimester abortion is perfectly safe. Which is it?

If Parental Notice does have the effect of delaying a minor girls' November 26, 2007 decision about abortion, is that such a bad thing? Should a decision with such potential risks and long term consequences be taken in haste or desperation? Certainly not.

If a minor girl postpones a decision about abortion because of Parental Notice, the result may not be a later term abortion but rather the birth of a child and grandchild.