

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1218. There is nothing more important in parent-child relationships than for parents to be involved in the healthcare decisions of their children.

The basic parental right and responsibility is perhaps most critical in the case of pregnancies of young woman.

In most American homes, no one cares more about the welfare, health, and safety of a child than her parents.

Although a young woman may be frightened or feel or ashamed to share with her parents, parents are usually best able to provide support for these most personal decisions.

Unfortunately, not all young women are able to confide in their parents should they become pregnant. A victim of family violence or incest is often not in a position to share her pregnancy with her parents for fear of further abuse.

This bill, although laudable for its intention to encourage communication between parents and children, does not provide alternatives for a young woman who is unable, for fear of physical or emotional abuse, to involve her parents in her decision.

In addition, the bill would criminalize the actions of close family members who might seek to assist a young woman who is struggling with this monumental decision. For troubled American households, grandparents, estranged parents, aunts, uncles, or siblings often serve in the parental role.

The bill unfortunately does not make provisions for such circumstances. In fact, it may put these young women in a more dangerous situation should they feel compelled to turn to illicit providers of abortion services or travel alone.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the need for more parental involvement in their children's lives, but for these reasons, I must vote `no' on H.R. 1218.

# Speaking against the Child Custody Protection Act

Tuesday, 29 June 1999 19:00

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