



## Florida House of Representatives

402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida  
32399-1300

**Johnnie Byrd**  
Speaker

420 The Capitol  
(850) 488-1450

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Tom Denham  
(850) 488-1450

### **HOUSE SPEAKER JOHNNIE BYRD, SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES FILE BRIEF IN PARENTAL NOTIFICATION LAWSUIT**

TALLAHASSEE – -8/11-04- Speaker Johnnie Byrd filed a friend of the court brief to oppose a lawsuit recently filed to keep a constitutional amendment off the ballot.

Fourteen other house representatives joined Byrd in filing the brief, which seeks to allow Florida voters to decide whether parents should be notified when someone convinces their children to have an abortion.

The American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood filed suit recently to prevent voters from deciding the issue.

“The ballot measure is clear and compelling – but the ACLU and Planned Parenthood are trying to mislead the court,” Byrd said. “Their legal argument is just a smoke screen to disenfranchise Florida voters and take away their right to decide the issue, just as the liberal courts have stripped parents of their right to know.”

Other legislators that joined in the brief were Representatives Thad Altman, Kevin Ambler, Gus Michael Bilirakis, Gaston Cantens, Jennifer Carroll, Adam Hasner, Ed Homan, Jim Kallinger, Sandra Murman, Dave Murzin, Mitch Needleman, Ralph Poppell, John Stargel and Baxter Troutman.

In 1999, the Legislature passed a bill requiring parental notification. That law was struck down in 2000 by the Florida Supreme Court on the grounds it was not permissible by the Florida Constitution. This session, lawmakers passed a bill to place on the ballot a measure to give the Legislature the constitutional authority to craft a parental notification law.

The legislation deals only with notifying parents that their child is going to have an invasive surgical procedure. While parental consent must be given before aspirin can be administered to a minor, current law does not require that parents are even notified in the case of an abortion. Forty two other states have such notification laws.

Understanding that under rare circumstances, the wellbeing of a minor might be compromised by such notice, the legislation includes a provision to create a procedure for judicial waiver of the notification.

“The most important thing we can do is open the lines of communication between parent and child,” Byrd said. “There are few times where communication is more important in creating or maintaining a strong family than when a teen becomes pregnant.”

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