

June 12, 2003

### Akin Files Parent's Right to Know Act Requires parental notification by clinics prior to issuing contraceptives to minors

Washington, D.C.- Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO) today introduced H.R. 2444, the Parent's Right to Know Act of 2003. The bill, which currently has 86 original cosponsors, requires that written notice be provided to parents before contraceptive drugs and devices are distributed to their minor child by a federal funded Title X clinic.

Currently, federally funded clinics are prohibited from disclosing information to parents when their unemancipated minor child seeks contraceptive drugs or devices, including injections.

"Parents have the right to know if their children are being placed at medical risk, and my bill would ensure that moms and dads are informed when their children are given contraceptive drugs or devices," Akin said. "What is at issue here is the primacy of a parent's right to be informed and to have a decision-making role regarding their children's health. When you consider that schools require parental consent to participate on a field trip and that parental consent is also required for ear piercing or tattoos it doesn't make sense to have lesser standards as requirements for such a significant medical treatment or prescription."

The decision to use birth control can have significant health and social consequences. According to manufacturer's warnings contraceptive side effects can include blood clotting, bone deterioration and blindness. It is thought that some contraceptives can aggravate heart conditions and pose other significant risk factors.

"To not inform parents that such a critical decision is being made is unfair to them and negligent regarding children's health," said Akin. "This is especially so if a family is relying on publicly funded health care because of financial considerations."