

State puts abortion consent into action



JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi has ordered doctors to immediately start requiring parental consent before performing abortions on unmarried women under 18.

A federal appeals court in New Orleans refused to reconsider its May 26 order that the state's parental consent law is constitutional, Hunt Cole, a special assistant attorney general, said Tuesday.

"This means our parental consent statute is now fully effective as law," Cole said.

The law was passed in 1986 but has been tied up in court since a federal judge blocked its enforcement later that year. The state withheld notifying doctors of the law taking effect, pending an appeal by a New York group.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans refused on July 1 to rehear the case.

The law requires a doctor to obtain written permission from both parents before performing an abortion on an unmarried woman under 18. In cases of separation or divorce, a doctor must get consent from the custodial parent.

In addition, doctors are required to:

- Get permission of only the mother if the pregnancy was caused by the father.
- Obtain an order from a chancery judge if the minor wants to avoid getting the consent of parents. Such cases are confidential and a judge must rule in 72 hours.

The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York asked the appeals court to block the law pending an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The appeal has yet to be filed. The high court, which has upheld parental consent laws in other states, doesn't return from summer recess until October.

Catherine Albisa of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy said lawyers are studying the possibility of filing a new challenge in a Mississippi court in an attempt to get into court sooner.

Mississippi has three clinics that perform abortions. In addition, a physician in Gulfport performs abortions. Jackson is one of more than a dozen cities targeted for anti-abortion protests from Friday through July 18.

House limits new student loan plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted last week to limit President Clinton's plans to put the government in the business of directly making loans to college students, but the vote may have only symbolic effect.

By a roll call of 397-28, lawmakers voted to limit direct federal education loans to \$22 million for the next four years. Clinton wants the government to immediately begin lending the entire \$15 billion students currently borrow each year in federally guaranteed loans from banks.

The vote came on an amendment to the \$260 billion annual spending bill for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The bill passed 305-124 and sent to the Senate.

The vote was considered symbolic because in a separate deficit-reduction bill, the Senate already has voted to phase in the direct-loan plan much more

quickly. And the deficit-reduction bill passed earlier by the House would begin Clinton's plan in full immediately.

Nonetheless, sponsors of the measure approved Wednesday said they hoped the vote would pressure House and Senate negotiators to phase down Clinton's proposal in conference. They said the president's plan would force the government to borrow an extra \$52.9 billion over the next five years.

"It simply doesn't make sense to commit taxpayers to \$52.9 billion in new debt and hiring hundreds of new federal employees without knowing whether the program works," said sponsor Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn.

Four million to 6 million college and graduate students a year borrow money for school costs.

Administration officials say the government would save \$3 billion a year by making the

loans directly, because direct government loans would eliminate the profits that banks now earn on the loans. As a result, students could be charged lower interest rates.

Savings also would result because the government would avoid the fees it now pays banks for conducting the business and because it could do a better job of tracking down people who have defaulted, officials say.

Opponents — including bankers who would lose hundreds of millions of dollars annually — say Clinton's plan would be risky and drive up federal borrowing.

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