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## Lawmakers approve abortion-friendly legislation

**BYLINE:** By KRISTY HESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

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Legislation meant to ensure women can enter abortion clinics without interference cleared its first hurdle Thursday, while lawmakers blocked two bills pushed by abortion opponents.

One bill might have required medical care for any fetus that survives an abortion. The other would have created a special "Choose Life" license plate in **Illinois**.

Legislation making it a misdemeanor to interfere with women entering abortion clinics was approved 8-5 by a House judiciary committee. It now goes to the full House.

Under the bill, patients and clinic workers also would be able to sue anyone who intimidates or threatens women coming into an abortion clinic.

The American Civil Liberties Union supported the bill, saying it is modeled after a federal law and does not interfere with protesters' free speech.

**Illinois** Citizens for Life opposed the bill, arguing that abortion opponents have a right to counsel women and discourage them from entering.

"We shouldn't give laymen instead of law enforcement officers this power to take peaceful sidewalk counselors into court and try them and create a chilling affect on what they are trying to do," said lobbyist Ralph Rivera.

Also on Thursday, the Senate Health and Human Services Committee rejected a bill that declares any fetus with a beating heart or muscle movement outside the womb as "**born alive**."

The measure is in response to a rare abortion procedure in which labor is induced and the fetus sometimes survives, possibly for hours.

The sponsor, Sen. Rick Winkel, R-Champaign, said the bill is modeled after a recent federal policy that defines a "**born-alive**" infant.

But critics said defining when a fetus as "alive" could require doctors to provide care and might expose them to legal action if they don't, even if there was no way the fetus could survive outside the womb.

Winkel's bill got four "yes" votes and six "no" votes.

The same committee rejected a "Choose Life" license plate. Motorists would have been able to get the plate for an extra \$25 a year, with part of the money going to pregnancy centers that encourage adoption.

The vote was 4-6 against the measure.

The bills are HB2486, SB1082, SB1502.

On the Net: <http://www.legis.state.il.us>

Associated Press reporter John O'Connor contributed to this story.

**PERSON:** RICK WINKEL (65%);

**ORGANIZATION:** AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (57%); AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (57%);

**COUNTRY:** UNITED STATES (94%);

**STATE:** ILLINOIS, USA (94%);

**COMPANY:** CHOOSE LIFE (92%); AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (65%);

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