

Senator hopes to limit abortions

Two bills moving forward, but 3rd measure rejected

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INDIANAPOLIS — Three bills meant to limit abortions — or add more regulatory hoops — have been filed so far in the Indiana Senate.

“That is the universe we live in today — playing defense,” said Betty

Cockrum, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Indiana. “It’s frustrating. We keep having the same discussion.”

More abortion-related bills are expected as legislation in both the House and Senate is made public on the state’s legislative website.

The first three are all authored by

Columbia City Republican Sen. Jim Banks, who said he isn’t afraid of being aggressive and introducing controversial ideas.

“As a staunch pro-life legislator, one of my missions is to do everything I can to limit abortions in our state,” he said.

His first bill, Senate Bill 183, is a

new idea for Indiana. He said he drafted the legislation in concert with a national group, Americans United for Life.

The bill would prohibit abortions if a woman seeks it solely because of the sex of the fetus (sometimes called sex selection) or because the fetus has been diagnosed with Down syndrome or a “genetic abnormality.”

Senate President Pro Tem David

Long, R-Fort Wayne, has already killed this bill, saying it is clearly unconstitutional. It will not receive a hearing.

But Banks’ two other bills have been sent to the Senate Health Committee, where similar bills have received hearings in the past.

Senate Bill 101 would require the state to develop specific written ma-

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materials to be given to a woman considering an abortion. A similar provision is already in law, but the material is provided on a website because of cost concerns.

Banks’ legislation, which specifies headline wording and type size, would put the cost on abortion providers. He compared it to people

receiving pamphlets and written information when they get a knee replacement or other medical procedure. But there are no state laws requiring that practice, he conceded.

Senate Bill 179 would apply the same physical building requirements to a clinic giving medical abortion drugs as a center performing surgical abortions.

Cockrum said Planned Parenthood’s Lafayette office is the only location that would be affected. She said doctors

give two doses of medication to a patient — the first one being taken in the office.

“Why does the size of the door and hallway matter?” Cockrum asked.

Banks said he is simply being consistent between surgical and medical abortions.

Cockrum is most concerned that there will be legislation introduced that will limit access to birth control. Bills on that topic have not yet surfaced.

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