

helping families to have good communication systems, to be strong and healthy. Is it because I'm opposed to young people telling their parents? Absolutely not. In fact, on occasion I have encouraged young people to do just that. And so why does this bill leave me so angry and hurting? Because nobody can show me how this bill will help the young people. No one can show me how this bill will make a teenager do what they have decided they're not going to do. And no one has showed me how this is going to make families who have never had good communication systems suddenly have them because this law is in place. And so I'm forced to conclude that what this bill is really all about is the codification of the belief that government has the right to control women in the most personal and private aspect of their lives, that we are no more than property to be regulated and restricted, that we are too stupid, too incompetent and too amoral to make good decisions. This bill leaves me angry because it perpetuates the belief not that young girls should be helped when they are pregnant but rather that they should be punished, and so we're putting in place one more system that will beat up on young girls instead of help them. This bill leaves me angry because after the first debate a fellow senator came up and said to me, Jessie, this has nothing to do with reason or logic. What this is all about is we're Catholics and Catholics do what the Catholic Church tells them to do. And I am angry again because I am reminded that this is about beliefs, not facts, be they religious or otherwise. I am incensed because this discussion does not belong in the Legislature. It belongs between priests and parishioners, between ministers and their congregations, between physicians and their patients, and, yes, between parents and their children. It does not belong between government and women. I am willing to talk about conception representing life if I could get you who support this bill to talk about true life. I'm even willing to talk about the protection of the fetus if I could get the same level of commitment for protecting the child once it's born. I am even willing to talk about the morality of women if I could get this body to talk about morality of our society. But having watched the votes go the last couple of years on a variety of issues, I am not optimistic that this conversation will ever occur. You can vote for LB 425 because your faith deems it, vote for LB 425 because you think your voters want it and will get you reelected, vote for 425 because you believe girls ought to be punished for getting pregnant, but don't vote for it under the erroneous assumption that it will help young girls who are faced with a crisis. This