



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 22, 2012

Akin's Abortion Stand In Tune With Party Platform

Even as Mitt Romney and a host of other Republican leaders were urging Rep. Todd Akin to drop out of the [Missouri Senate race](#), the national party's platform committee approved a pro-life plank August 21 that more closely resembled Akin's position than Romney's on the controversial issue of abortion.

Akin, who does not believe there should be an exception for rape in laws banning abortion, stumbled into a huge controversy on that point when asked about it in an interview that aired August 19 on a St. Louis television station. Akin said he believed pregnancies resulting from rape are rare. "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down," he said. If pregnancy does occur, he added, "I think there should be some punishment, but the punishment should be to the rapist, and not attacking the child."



Romney, who had called the remarks "inexcusable," joined a long list of Republicans who called on Akin to withdraw from the Senate race so that Missouri Republicans could choose a candidate with a better chance of defeating the incumbent, first-term Democrat Claire McCaskill.

"As I said yesterday, Todd Akin's comments were offensive and wrong and he should very seriously consider what course would be in the best interest of our country," Romney said in a statement issued on August 21. "Today, his fellow Missourians urged him to step aside, and I think he should accept their counsel and exit the Senate race." The "fellow Missourians" who have called on Akin to quit the race include the state's Republican Senator Roy Blunt and former GOP Senators John Ashcroft, Kit Bond, John Danforth, and Jim Talent. Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader in the Senate, also joined the chorus calling for Akin's withdrawal, as did Republican Senators Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, Richard Burr of North Carolina, and Olympia Snowe of Maine.

The National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee announced it would withhold \$5 million in advertising it had planned to spend on the Missouri race if Akin stayed in. Crossroads GPS, the political action co-founded by former President George W. Bush's political advisor Karl Rove, also vowed to withhold its support if Akin is the candidate. But the six-term congressman, who won the Senate nomination in a three-way primary on August 7, repeated his determination to stay in the race as Tuesday's 5 p.m. deadline for withdrawal neared. There is a second deadline on September 25, but by that time Akin would need a court order to have his name removed from the ballot. Such an action would likely be contested by the Democrats, who believe Akin's position on abortion would be a liability for him, especially in light of his recent remarks. Noting that Akin had won his party's primary,



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McCaskill told a St. Louis television station it would be a “radical thing” for the party “to try to force someone who had won an election honestly off the ballot just because you think you want to pick another candidate.”

“We are in this race for the long haul and we are going to win it,” Akin pledged in a radio interview August 21 with conservative host Dana Loesch. “We can’t run from our shadows every time someone says ‘abortion.’” Akin, who apologized August 19 for using the word “legitimate” in relation to rape, was also on former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee’s radio program Tuesday. “I said one word in one sentence on one day, and everything changed,” he told Huckabee. But he did not back away from his statement that if a pregnancy results from rape, it is the rapist who should be punished and the life of the unborn child should be spared. “I believe [in] the defense of the unborn and a deep respect for life,” Akin said, adding those “are not things to run away from.”

Akin’s stand differs in that regard from that of the party’s presidential candidate, Romney, who is preparing to formally accept his party’s nomination next week. Romney has said he believes the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion should be overturned, but he believes laws banning abortion should include exceptions for rape and incest as well instances where a pregnancy poses a threat to the life of the mother. The Republican National Committee’s platform committee on August 21 approved a pro-life [plank](#) that makes no mention of exceptions. The entire platform will be voted on August 27 when delegates gather in Tampa, Florida, for the Republican National Convention.

“Faithful to the ‘self-evident’ truths enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed,” said the plank adopted by the 110-member platform committee. “We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children.”

The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified three years after the end of the Civil War, says in part:

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

In its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled there was no legal basis for regarding an unborn child as a “person” and held that the “due process” clause of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments protected the liberty of a woman to terminate her pregnancy.

Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, chairman of the platform committee and an abortion opponent, thanked the committee for “affirming our respect for human life.” But in Missouri, some Republicans were venting their resentment over the eagerness of party leaders, in state and nationally, to ditch the pro-life Senate candidate.

“I am so disappointed in our national and our state committee when we throw our own under the bus,” Ione Dines, a Republican State committee member, told the [New York Times](#). “Missouri Right to Life supports Congressman Akin’s defense of the life of an innocent unborn child conceived by rape,” said Pam Fichter, president of the group’s political action committee. Rick Mathes, executive director of the Mission Gate Prison Ministry in Chesterfield, Missouri, predicted a backlash against the campaign to oust Akin from the race.

“No one is speaking up on his behalf — this is a travesty,” Mathes said. “With all this negative publicity,



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it'll have a reverse spin, just watch. More people will be getting out to vote for him."

Photo of Rep. Todd Akin speaking with reporters: AP Images



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