

Are Todd Akin's 'Legitimate Rape' Comments Forgivable?

Missouri Congressman **Todd Akin** is meeting with pressure from all sides to bow out of the Senate race. But so far, the embattled politician is refusing to back down in the wake of offensive comments about rape.

The controversy began on Sunday when KTVI, a St. Louis television station, aired an interview with Akin. The reporter asked him if he would support abortions for raped women. His response:

"It seems to me, first of all, from what I understand from doctors, that's really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

Akin later said he "misspoke" and has apologized on former Gov. Mike Huckabee's radio show, saying his previous remarks were "ill-conceived, and it was wrong." Nevertheless, even some of Akin's Republican colleagues are questioning his ability to lead after the fallout. He has also lost a key funding source.

Akin took to YouTube with a video that aims to do damage control. In it, he says, "Fact is, rape can lead to pregnancy. The truth is rape has many victims. The mistake I made was in the words I said, not in the heart I hold. I ask for your forgiveness."

But are Christian pro-lifers willing to forgive him? It appears some are more willing than others to overlook the "legitimate rape" comments.

Patrick Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, based in Washington, D.C., says Akin's comment using the term "legitimate rape" is offensive, repugnant and troubling.

"Rape is always violent and criminal and can never be linked with the term 'legitimate.' Although I respect the record of Congressman Akin, especially in the **pro-life** community, some comments are so offensive and indefensible that one must assume the full consequences and responsibility for making them," Mahoney says.

"Congressman Akin can demonstrate he accepts full responsibility by removing himself from the Missouri Senate race. On a practical level, these comments will follow the Congressman throughout the entire campaign and not allow him to deal with the critical issues facing America and the failed record of President Obama."

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, has a different view. As she sees it, Akin, a longtime pro-life leader, has said he had misspoken, and no one is arguing that rape is anything but a despicable, horrible crime.

"Abortion supporters like Sen. Claire McCaskill are trying to use this issue as a smokescreen to hide from their radical, **pro-abortion** records that are out of step with the majority of Missourians and the American people," Dannenfelser says.

"On the issues of taxpayer funding of elective abortion in **Obamacare**, protection of unborn girls being targeted in the womb solely because of their gender, and whether children capable of feeling pain in the womb should be protected, President Obama and Senator McCaskill have been on the wrong side, showing that they favor abortion on-demand, for any reason, up to the moment of birth, subsidized by the taxpayers."