

## TAKE HEART! THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT IS ADVANCING.

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PINE BLUFFS –Thirty-two years ago, the United States Supreme Court, in a frenzy of judicial activism at its worst, decided *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, unleashing a killing force in America rivaling the deaths caused by Stalin, Hitler and Mao.

Since January 22, 1973, abortion has claimed the lives of approximately 45 million babies, as Americans, proving that the majority tends to go along with almost anything, accepted the Court's ruling. For awhile.

It wasn't long before these decisions spawned a vocal antiabortion movement manned by those who saw the rulings as an attack on the right to life, the first of four inalienable rights described in *The Declaration of Independence* as deriving from our "Creator," and given to all human beings.

Every year since *Roe* and *Doe*, on the anniversary of those infamous edicts, there's been a massive protest march on Washington, D.C. This year's theme: "It is the duty of each American to uphold life principles for the common good of self, neighbor and country. No exceptions! No compromise!"

For years, many states have held pro-life marches in their state capitals. Wyoming held its annual March for Life on Saturday, January 22.

It's been a long, hard, acrimonious fight. Changing hearts and minds often is. But there are some encouraging signs that although this battle is not yet over, we're succeeding. Pro-lifers everywhere, and especially pro-life politicians, can take heart.

Here's why.

Remember the presidential election of 1992? Bush One told us that moral issues, especially character, *do* count. Well, fourteen years later a substantial number of Americans have decided they agree.

The latest election day exit polls support this view. Asked what was *the single most important issue upon which they based their vote*, 22% cited moral values — such as abortion! That's a larger number than those who thought the economy or the war against terrorism were the central issues.

Back in November, Bush Two received 80% of the votes of those who rank abortion as “very important,” 73% of all who believe abortion should be “mostly illegal,” and 77% of those who believe abortion should “always be illegal.”

This happened despite millions spent by pro-abortion groups like the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) and Planned Parenthood of America (PPA), attacking Mr. Bush's pro-life accomplishments. They favored John Kerry, whose voting record in the Senate against pro-life initiatives belied his campaign announcement that he believes “life begins at conception.”

On the pro-life side in November, the Susan B. Anthony List (SBAL), a woman's group working to elect pro-life candidates, outperformed its top pro-abortion rival, Emily's List. Eighty percent of the candidates it supported won. SBAL director, Jennifer Bingham was asked about this: “Despite unprecedented millions spent by pro-abortion groups to take back the Senate and the presidency, they lost over and over again,” she said. “Americans . . . stand with us wanting abortion restricted in this country.”

Faced with these defeats, a national pro-life Democrat group urged the Party to moderate its abortion stance. Kristen Day, director, Democrats for Life, said; “We're

hopeful the national party will re-assess its pro-abortion stance . . . They're costing us elections and abandoning our fundamental values of protecting and advocating for those who need a helping hand. Topping that list should be helping to protect the rights of the unborn."

That's an accurate assessment. The Party's pro-abortion presidential nominee failed to unseat a conservative pro-life Republican, while pro-abortion Democrats lost key House and Senate races. Former Senate minority leader Tom Daschle (D. S.D.) is an example. Daschle, while in office, frequently opposed pro-life legislation.

Statewide in 2004, Republicans gained control of at least three legislatures. Many pro-life Republicans defeated pro-abortion Democrats. Pro-life Democrats, however, fared well.

Finally, a recent *New York Times/CBS News* poll shows that only 34% of Americans now believe abortion should be "generally available," 44% support "stricter limits" of some kind, and 21% say it "should not be permitted." Do the math. Abortion is now frowned upon by 65% of Americans.

What caused this change? The pro-life foot soldiers in the trenches, who worked and prayed tirelessly for years, deserve kudos. Also, the advent of ultra-sound, which clearly shows a baby in that womb, not a blob of tissue, has played a significant role. But many in the know credit public debate over partial-birth abortion, a horrendous procedure whereby a baby is partially delivered, but while its head is still in the birth canal, its skull is perforated and a vacuum used to remove the intracranial contents, collapse the head and pull the body from the uterus. Gallup's January 2003 poll found 70% of Americans favored banning it. Congress outlawed the procedure. President Bush signed the ban, but pro-abortion groups filed suit, delaying its operation.

This shift in public opinion, elevating the importance of abortion, caught Democrat Party leaders by surprise. Whether Party leadership will reject pro-abortionists, a substantial segment of its base, and become more flexible on the issue, remains to be seen.

Whatever, this conclusion appears obvious: there's been a dramatic shifting of public opinion regarding morality generally and abortion specifically. Whether Democrat or Republican, state and federal legislators should take notice; a pro-life stance is not only more popular than it was, but a winner in the polling booth as well.

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