

WYOMING LEGISLATURE FAILS TO CONSIDER PRO-LIFE BILLS

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PINE BLUFFS --- Webster, that wise old sage, defined *increment* as "an increase; something gained or added, one of a series of regular additions." *Incrementalism* means a process by which regular additions or gains are made gradually.

Incrementalism was not initially valued as a tactic by some in the Pro-Life Movement. But gains made since the scourge of abortion came to America have occurred one step at a time, like building blocks forming the walls of a high-rise. Now we're at a place where, praise God, a culture of life may be emerging.

Wyoming's 58th Legislature started out looking good for the pro-life movement. Sparked by Senators Jim Anderson (R - SD2), Gerald Geis (R - SD20, John Barrasso, (R - 27), Representatives Deborah Alden (R - HD 3), Rodney Anderson, (R - HD 10), Bob Brechtel (R HD 38), Gerald Gay (R - 36), and Tom Lubnau, II (R - HD31), several promising bills were introduced.

House Bill 184, *The Defense of Marriage Act*, filed in the House on January 18th by Representatives Alden, Anderson, Brechtel and Gay, would have resolved the question of whether homosexual/lesbian unions performed in another state need to be recognized as valid in Wyoming --- a Constitutional Full Faith and Credit problem --- by saying they do not. It was assigned to the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Jack Landon (R. Sheridan). He failed to schedule it for Committee discussion in time to report it out prior to the Committee-of-the-Whole cutoff date.

House Bill 276, *A Woman's Right to Know*, sponsored by Representatives Brechtel and Gingery, would have required that a woman be fully informed as to the effects of abortion twenty-four hours prior to the procedure. Also assigned to the House Judiciary Committee, it died there for the same reason.

Pro-life bills die in Committee

In his weekly Legislative Report in the *Pine Bluffs Post*, on Feb. 17, usually mild-mannered Rodney "Pete" Anderson pointedly wrote: "Unfortunately I've been somewhat disappointed with Republican Leadership this session. Some Committee Chairmen have chosen to ignore morality by killing, in committee, issues like the Defense of Marriage Act and laws protecting the unborn ..."

Legislators who sponsor or run pro-life bills are on the front line in the battle to build a culture of life. Despite their efforts and those of other Christian leaders across Wyoming, a culture of life mentality is not yet pervasive enough.

Consequently, Committee chairmen who kill pro-life legislation with ploys resembling "pocket vetoes," are not experiencing constituent pressure to give these bills an airing.

On the national level

During the past four years, with creative and energetic support from President Bush and tireless efforts by many in Congress, several pro-life measures were enacted. Among them was *The Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act*, outlawing that horrendous procedure, *The Unborn Victims of Violence Act*, known as the *Laci & Connor Peterson Act*, recognizing unborn children as separate persons and legal victims when harmed during commission of federal crimes, the *Abortion Non-Discrimination Act*, prohibiting state and local governments from discriminating against health care providers for refusing to offer

abortions, and *The Weldon Amendment*, prohibiting the Patent Office from issuing patents on human embryos, including any created by cloning.

These gains happened because of hard work by many pro-life Senators all tireless pro-life fighters. Result? A certain momentum has been achieved nationally. The re-election of a pro-life President and the election of several pro-life Senators give every reason to believe that we're on a roll.

In fact, two pro-life initiatives, both strongly supported by the President, have been undertaken since the 109th Congress convened January 4th. The *Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act*, introduced last year by Senator Sam Brownback (R. KS) and Congressman Chris Smith (R. PA), requires abortionists to provide information to women seeking abortions at twenty weeks or later, that the babies in their wombs feel pain. This bill died last session, but since then, at a New York trial of a challenge to the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, strong expert testimony was elicited from Sunny Anand, Director of the Pain Neurobiology Laboratory at Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute, regarding the ability of a baby in the womb to experience pain. Armed with this medical evidence, proponents are predicting passage this year.

Encouraging signs also exist at the state level. In the 2004 elections, pro-life Democrats won legislative seats in Iowa, Missouri and Michigan, and pro-life Republicans won enough seats in three other state legislatures to give their party control.

The South Dakota state Senate on Feb. 28, approved three pro-life bills that would place additional limits on abortion in that state, LifeNBews.com said. The measures are expected to get the approval of pro-life Governor Mike Rounds., once they clear the legislature

One bill would ban abortions in South Dakota if the Supreme Court ever overturns *Roe v. Wade*; another would ensure women are provided proper information on abortion risks and dangers; a third would create a 15-member panel to study how abortion affects women. In 2002, 826 abortions were performed in the state.

Certainly, skirmishes have been lost this year, but you can take this to the bank; the war will be won nationally and locally --- one gain, one increase, one building block at a time.