

Packwood gets pro-choice support

By DOUG FICK
Of the Emerald

Abortion rights activists around the country have jumped on Sen. Bob Packwood's campaign bandwagon, a wagon many feel has enough momentum to propel the incumbent senator into a third term on Capitol Hill.

Packwood, R-Ore., supports abortion and says about \$500,000 of the \$750,000 now in his re-election campaign coffers has been contributed by abortion rights supporters, who call themselves pro-choice. The donations started rolling in after a letter of support from Gloria Steinem, editor of Ms. magazine, was sent to selected individuals on the magazine's mailing list and members of the National Abortion Rights League, Packwood says.

Many of the contributors to Packwood's campaign are women and 24 of the 25 county chairers at recent Packwood campaign conference in Wilsonville were women.

"Women play a prominent part in my election campaign," Packwood says. Anti-abortion groups have targeted Packwood as one of 12 Congressional incumbents to beat in the 1980 elections.

That targeting inspired Packwood to ask Steinem to send the letter, which outlines his stance on women's issues and the plans of anti-abortion groups to defeat him in 1980. Packwood says he spent \$5,000 on mailing costs and for the use of Ms. magazine's mailing list, but that Steinem, a long-time friend and supporter, wasn't paid for writing the letter.

Many of the women chairers at the campaign conference also voiced their support for Packwood's stance on women's issues and expressed indignation at the anti-abortion groups' efforts to unseat the incumbent senator.



Photo by Doug Fick

Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood's campaign is getting a lot of help this year from a single issue. Pro-choice advocates — those who advocate abortion rights for women — have joined Packwood's parade, prompted by a letter from feminist Gloria Steinem.

Signe Pribnow, the Marion County campaign chairer, says it was Packwood's stand on abortion that drew her to his re-election campaign.

"Many of the people working in this campaign will be in support of his stand on women's rights," Pribnow says. "If we don't get out and support pro-choice candidates they might pass an anti-abortion bill."

Pribnow says she received the Steinem letter and was "outraged" by the anti-abortion groups' plan to defeat the 12 Congress members cited as Congress' strongest abortion supporters. Pribnow says that as a two-term, ranking Republican and long-time abortion rights supporter, Packwood carries clout on women's rights issues and is near the top of the right-to-lifers' 1980 election hit list.

She blames the anti-abortion advocates for waging a single-issue campaign against Packwood.

"I don't like single-issue politics, and I resent fighting a single-issue attack," says Pribnow, who supports Packwood's stands on "almost everything." She cites the 1978 defeat of Dick Clark, an ex-senator from Iowa, as an example of the political strength of Right-To-Life groups. Clark's support of abortion cost him the single-issue election.

Pribnow is a Democrat, but says she would not support a pro-abortion Democrat in the 1980 Senate race, because Packwood's seniority and voting record give him more political clout than any freshman senator would have.

"I am supporting the senator because of his long record with abortion rights," says Mary Heffernan, staff director of the National Abortion Rights League's Oregon headquarters. "If Sen. Packwood loses in this election, it is very likely that a national anti-abortion amendment will be passed."

But Heffernan, who was wearing a "Proudly for Packwood" tag, says she disagrees with Packwood's stand on many issues.

"Single issue (politics) in general I'm opposed to," she says. "I'm not happy being a single-issue person. I am a single-issue person in this case."

Heffernan says the advantages of Packwood's influence in the fight over abortion outweigh the disadvantages of his views on other issues. Abortion rights are being cut back in Congress through the use of anti-abortion riders on appropriations bills, she says, adding that the next step in the war against abortion will be the introduction of national legislation totally outlawing abortion.

Packwood is one of few senators with enough power to stop such legislation, she says.

"This is the first election we've seen people identify women's rights as a favorable issue," says Jack Faust, Packwood's campaign manager. Faust says Packwood has supported women's rights issues since 1960, long before they were politically popular.

The influx of money and effort from pro-choice sources has not made the Packwood campaign a single-issue effort, he says, pointing to the economy, energy, timber management and defense spending as some of the many other issues Packwood will stress during the 1980 race.

Rosalie Huss, Packwood's sole Republican challenger, has criticized Packwood for his support of abortion, which she calls "baby killing."

Packwood says he welcomes the money and support of the abortion rights supporters, but says he is not running a single-issue campaign.

"I'm not going to campaign on the issue of — 'Elect me, I'm pro-choice.' "



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