

Wednesday the Senate Judiciary Committee endorsed a proposed constitutional amendment which empowers Congress and state legislatures with the ability to ban abortions. Such an amendment would overturn a nine year old Supreme Court decision legalizing most abortions. It's likely the issue will come to the Senate floor sometime this spring.

cort fernald

sidelong glances

The proposed constitutional amendment is the singular handiwork of conservative Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, but it represents the efforts of a broad base of abortion foes. Liberals have promised to use every parliamentary device, including filibuster, to block the passage of this constitutional amendment. Although the fight seems heavily stacked against senate liberals — and the consensus of the American people.

A January poll conducted by the Associated Press and NBC News showed that three of four Americans were opposed to a constitutional ban on abortion.

In the nationwide telephone poll adults were asked, "Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution which would give Congress the authority to prohibit abortions?"

Seventy-five percent of the respondents were opposed to a constitutional amendment granting Congress this authority. Nineteen percent said they favored it; while six percent were not sure.

Fifty-seven percent of those polled agreed with the statement: "Every woman who wants to have an abortion should be able to have one."

Seventy-seven percent agreed with the statement: "The decision to have an abortion should be left to the woman and her physician."

Granted, polls aren't conclusive — though, they do illustrate trends. In this case there appears to be strong opposition to a constitutional ban on abortions. There is also a definite condoning of a woman's choice regarding pregnancy.

Now comes the Hatch bill — and another, alternative bill, proposed by arch-conservative Jessé Helms R-North Carolina. And at the top is Pres. Ronald Reagan who, in recent statements, supported the proposal for a constitutional ban on abortions. Reagan, in a message to an anti-abortion rally in Washington, said: "Government has the responsibility to opt on the side of life for the unborn." He also called for "greater protection for the most defenseless and innocent among us — the unborn child." Reagan made these statements the same week he ordered devastating cuts to the Medicaid and human resources budget.

There is something inherently criminal in the conservatives' efforts to legislate a woman's conscience and womb. The conservatives' actions — and those of the neo-Christian right — abandon all respect for and attempt to uphold the Bill of Rights. Will a woman's choice be legislated into extinction?

The Emerald has recently been suffering internal conflicts regarding the perimeters of opinion and the handling of sensitive issues. The apparent resolution is that "personal" opinions are permitted only in reviews and columns. However, editorial opinions are subject to a whole different criterion. At least that's how the debacle was unraveled by the Emerald's editor.

The upshot is that as the editorial page editor I cannot write an Emerald editorial on abortion. Although, after a couple of squelched efforts, I discovered I was allowed to address the issue in a personal column.

What doesn't sit well with me is the reactionary tendencies of people like Hatch and Helms. The conservatives and neo-Christian right were screaming about too much federal government before Reagan took office. Now these rightist groups are clamoring up each other's backs to legislate at the federal level laws promoting their inflexible moral view.

Lastly, is a constitutional amendment the proper place to resolve the abortion issue? I don't think so. The Supreme Court made a reasonable decision nine years ago.



SENOR CASTRO EXPORTS HIS REVOLUTION, AND SENOR REAGAN EXPORTS HIS ECONOMIC THEORIES... WHY IS EVERYBODY INTENT ON DESTROYING US?

letters

Squirrels

Squirrels again! Let's be realistic. The squirrels don't have to be our enemies. Not if we love them. Not if we sit down with them, chant with them, commune with them. Squirrels only attack people who put out bad vibes. Get in tune with your inner self, get in tune with the squirrels. It's just like every other problem in the world today — pollution, war, inequality, repression, the bomb — it will all go away if we just learn to passively sit and stare at our navels and stop thinking. Squirrel arrogance can be stopped only by our metaphysical efforts. Nothing so frighteningly real can be dealt with by real-world action.

Linda Jencson
Anthropology

Still mad

Poor Matt Meyer. You've taken a pounding from the review of "Making Love", haven't you. I bet you wish everyone would just drop it, huh. Sorry — I haven't had my say yet. Maybe I'm just making a fool out of myself talking to a brick wall, but it's been what? — 3 maybe 4 weeks since you wrote your little piece and I still get mad when I remember your ignorance and prejudice.

Number one, you stated "Homosexuality is more than a social issue; it's a moral issue." Whose morals — yours? What gives you the right to say a person's sexual orientation has anything to do with morality? You make me laugh. Let me ask you this — where does it stop? Are you going to also frown upon

sex before marriage, heterosexual one-night-stands, anal intercourse, oral intercourse, and sex with or between those still under eighteen? Why don't you just force your standards on everybody else and we'll elect you Secretary of Moral Standards.

You said society's morals are crumbled because of one man's opinion of life. What about all the heterosexual couples who have "one-night-stands"? Homosexuals don't own the market. Approximately 98.5 percent of child molestation is by heterosexual men. How many women have you been with in your life? Are you so pure? I saw the movie and it was refreshing to see gay people as doctors, lawyers, and as the well-adjusted people they are. So keep your morals to yourself.

Ann Marie Piazza
Psychology major

IFC charge

Rick Poulin and Lori Lieberman charge in a recent Emerald letter that the IFC "recklessly crippled the Forensics program cutting its budget from \$8,177 to 5,344. Neither their rhetoric nor arguments support that charge.

Oregon law mandates that incidental fees be used for the physical and cultural development of students. But the Forensics program partakes heartily of academic fare. Forensics' participants typically receive academic credit — credit no doubt well deserved — but on this activity incidental fees should not unreservedly be spent.

Cuts in Forensics' budget were the result of IFC resolutions, on record, adopted

before budget hearings began. The committee's judgment, that incidental fees should not pay for student meals, lodging, or travel outside states bordering Oregon, have been consistently applied to all programs. Forensics has no special claim to "sympathy."

Poulin and Lieberman imply that a "predisposition" to cut Forensics' budget denied the group due process. They misunderstand legislative process. The IFC does not negotiate program budgets, not to weigh the merits of programs with judicial precision. It makes hard choices of policy and priority. Before it makes those choices programs have the right to be heard. Forensics presented its arguments. It was heard. It did not prevail.

The IFC harbors no animosity towards the Forensics program. Its successes are commendable.

Steve C. Baldwin
IFC member, Law

letters policy

The Emerald will accept and attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on issues, ideas and topics of interest to the University community.

The letters **must** be limited to 250 words, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to The Emerald offices, EMU 300.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style, or content. Publication is dependent upon space available.

staff

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during finals week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co.

News 686-5511
Advertising/Business 686-3712
Classifieds 686-4343
Production 686-4381

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