

Idaho strikes blow to Roe vs. Wade

Call it what you will, but the Idaho Legislature has fired the first salvo in the abortion debate. In a move that has lit a fire under every abortion activist, for or against, a small group of lawmakers has made what could prove to be a fatal strike against legalized abortion.

The bill, which passed last week, would prohibit abortion in every case except severe fetal deformity, some cases of incest, non-statutory rape reported within a seven-day time frame, and when birth would pose a life-threatening risk to the mother.

The document now sits on Idaho Gov. Jim Andrus' desk. Though he has committed himself to some sort of a decision by Saturday, Andrus thus far has kept silent on what action he will take.

The debate was triggered by the national Right to Life organization, which sponsored the bill in the Idaho Legislature. The measure is the same one the group has tried to pass off on other states, only to be denied. Some have said it is too stringent, and might get struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Right to Life people wouldn't mind a day in court: they designed the bill as a vehicle to test Roe vs. Wade.

Pro-choice and pro-life supporters have flooded the state with phone calls and letters, trying to sway Andrus to their side. The National Organization for Women is trying to implement a boycott of Idaho products (i.e. potatoes) if the bill is passed. Despite some pressure from Idaho businessmen, warning him of the effects of such a boycott, Andrus claims economics will not be the basis of his decision.

While a boycott would send a strong message to Idaho lawmakers, one wonders at the feasibility. A strong boycott (which is by no means a sure thing) would greatly damage the Idaho economy, hurting people who may actually oppose the new law. And if big corporations, such as McDonalds, refuse to honor the boycott, it turns into a hollow threat.

The decision to tighten the abortion laws should not have been made by the legislature. Such a controversial topic needs to be put in front of the voters. On Wednesday, the legislature killed a measure which would have put the issue on the ballot. This cowardly display of constituency distrust reflects badly on the Idaho lawmakers.

Either way he goes, Andrus' political career is over. It's the proverbial no-win situation, because whatever he decides will anger a substantial portion of the population. The question remains whether the Republican-dominated legislature passed the bill because the members were fundamentally opposed to abortion, or saw it as a means to "get" Andrus.

Our position on abortion remains the same: leave Roe vs. Wade alone. Though it may be too late, we urge Andrus to reject this legislation, or at the very least, let the voters decide.

THE IDAHO LEGISLATURE HAS PASSED A LAW MAKING DOCTORS CRIMINALS FOR PERFORMING ABORTIONS ON DEMAND.



EWEB rate hike, recall are necessary

Back in February, the Eugene Water and Electric Board held a meeting to discuss rate increase and instead ended up firing EWEB General Manager Jean Reeder.

The ensuing controversy kept the board from discussion of the rate hike until Monday, when it unanimously passed a 9.4 percent rate hike.

EWEB estimates that the typical electric bill will increase from \$47.57 a month to \$52.12, an increase of \$4.55 a month. The board also passed an 8 percent increase in steam rates and a 5 percent hike in water rates.

The rate hike was originally proposed by Reeder to boost EWEB's cash reserves. EWEB's bond rating has dropped over the past few years and Reeder hoped a larger cash reserve would encourage new investment.

Although the rate hike is a bit spendy — especially for student budgets — it is necessary. EWEB has a nation-wide reputation as a progressive power company. Keeping a high bond rating will ensure the company's ability to expand and experiment.

At this point, the rate hike is taking a back seat to Reeder's controversial firing and and the possible recall of three members of the EWEB board.

A coalition called Citizens for A Responsible EWEB formed in March to gather signatures for a recall of EWEB President Dennis Solin, Vice President Randall Thwing and board member Rob Willis.

So far recall backers say they have gathered enough signatures to get recalls for both Solin and Thwing on the ballot. They are confident they will gather enough signatures to put Willis' name on the recall ballot as well.

The recall is an important issue and the voters deserve a say in it. Public outcry over the methods used by these board members to fire Reeder was tremendous. Organizations of such size and importance to the community need to make their decisions out in the open.

The three board members who voted to oust Reeder have been accused of violating Oregon Public Meeting Laws; that in itself is enough to warrant a recall. Their behind-the-scenes planning and scheming to have Reeder removed sets a horrid example of public policy.

The recall is a good idea. Because of their actions, the EWEB board has lost a great deal of public support. Those three members should at least be held up to public scrutiny. Whether they are recalled or not is up to the voters.

Letters

Naive

Theist religions are steeped in myth, superstition and fear imposed by clergy. Theist leaders have no difficulty perceiving error in the claims of other sects; they are merely incapable of admitting the error of their own claims. Such conduct is customary where ignorance and fraud prevail.

Residents of Eugene imagine themselves tolerant and enlightened — distant from religious persecution. How naive! For three years, groups of men and women, teens to seniors, have daily harassed this old atheist letter writer as he plods his course along Coburg Road.

They have broken into and ransacked his personal belongings (papers); left death threats; undermined his efforts to earn a living; and sought to make him an object of ridicule. Undaunted, with keen mind,

confident of the merit and necessity of his (the people's) cause, he ignores their loathsome conduct — promoted by overwhelming pity at the psychotic behavior of misguided Christian zealots, incited by a clergy incapable of proving atheist argument wrong in a civil, impartial, written or oral public forum.

Such tyranny apes Nazis and Communists, and shows clergy's disregard for community social/psychological welfare by callously inciting "anomie" — a collapse or confusion of social norms that is a major cause of disorientation and violence, described by Emile Durkheim in his sociological class, "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life," and by Sigmund Freud in "The Future of an Illusion" and "Civilization and Its Discontents."

Intelligent people must oppose Christian leaders who seek to drive iconoclasts in the

community to acts of violence that are then described as senseless assaults by individuals gone berserk. Christianity anyone?

Bert Tryba
Eugene

Abuses

Oregon state Senator C.T. "Cub" Houck's lawyers are being supported in their quest to control the Oregon Government Ethics Committee, to the same destructive extent that they have undermined the public usefulness of Oregon's Commission on Judicial Fitness and Disability, by suggesting that:

- Oregon State Bar member lawyers and their costly pleading and practice forms control said committee proceedings;
- Public complaints, involving abuses of public office, or malfeasance, be restricted by a sea of technicalities;

- The media's responsibility to inform the public, and the public's right to be informed, be denied under the pretext of "confidentiality," that do not apply to other judicial complaint filings, nor can apply to hide the growing malicious and arrogant abuses of public trust, since public officials must be held to a higher, not lower, ethical standard of conduct.

Both the Oregon and United States constitutions were designed to limit officials' powers, and protect our civil rights by the oversight of a free press, per United States Constitution, Amendment 1, and Oregon Constitution, Article 1, Sec-

tions 1 and 8.

Oregon state Senator Glenn Otto, chairman of the Oregon Government Operations Committee, seems to favor Houck's (a target of Ethics Commission proceedings), lawyers, John DeLorenzo, and "reform" of Oregon Government Ethics Commission structure and proceedings, which you, the intelligent Oregonian, must object to by letters and phone calls to all Oregon representatives and senators. And your local media(s)!

Norman Keith Chase
Eugene

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.