

Dying to dye



MELODY CONROY/Emerald

Kathy Kale teaches Yumiko Ohki the art of tie dyeing during an EMU Craft Center Workshop. Workshops are offered through the end of July.

Foster loses key vote; confirmation in doubt

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dr. Henry Foster lost a crucial Senate vote in his bid to become surgeon general Wednesday — a defeat President Clinton blamed on an abortion “stranglehold” on the Republican Party. Clinton pledged to keep fighting before a second vote Thursday that could be the final blow.

“This was not a vote about the right of the president to choose a surgeon general. This was really a vote about every American woman’s right to choose,” Clinton said, appearing with Foster in the Rose Garden just after the effort to break a Republican roadblock fell three votes short.

The Tennessee gynecologist-obstetrician has said he performed 39 abortions in four decades.

“Because he cannot pass the political litmus test that has a stranglehold on the other party, they cannot even allow a simple vote,” Clinton complained.

The 57-43 vote to cut off debate and clear the way for a final confirmation vote was three votes shy of the 60 needed. Supporters have one more chance to prevail — at 2 p.m. EDT Thursday — but their chances appeared slim.

“I’m not through yet and we’re going to do our best to win it,” Clinton said. But Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a leading Foster booster who is usually more upbeat, conceded, “It’s very tough.”

In three hours of contentious debate, Republicans argued they were not just opposing abortion but felt Foster was not the right candidate for the job — especially after the stormy tenure of former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., chairwoman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee that approved the nomination 9-7, voted with Democrats Wednesday. But she

still opposes Foster, calling him “the wrong person to step into this badly damaged office at this time.”

Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., and other supporters said they had singled out five Republicans who might possibly change their votes. But they would not name names. Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., was singled out, as was Sen. John Warner, R-Va.. Warner, however, took to the floor to say his vote would not change after his office received more than 100 calls Wednesday afternoon.

The vote Wednesday was to stop a threatened filibuster by Phil Gramm, R-Texas, who is running for the GOP presidential nomination, as is Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. Eleven Republicans sided with the Senate’s 46 Democrats.

Democrats accused other Republicans of voting for reasons having little to do with the nominee himself.

“Dr. Foster is being crucified on the altar of presidential politics,” said Sen. James Exon, D-Neb.

Gramm suggested Foster held “radical views about abortion,” and said, “I do not believe those views represent traditional American values. I do not believe they represent the will of the American people.”

Dole said, “Somewhere out there among America’s hundreds and thousands of physicians, there is a man or woman whose past actions and statements would not divide the American people and this chamber.”

He suggested that Clinton himself had been thinking ahead to the elections.

“This nomination was meant to try to drive a wedge between Republicans on the issue of abortion. President Clinton made a calculated political move,” Dole said.

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