

Curtis hears claps, catcalls

by Steve Arvanette

Addressing a crowd of approximately 70 people, U. S. Senator Carl Curtis spoke on a wide range of topics including President Nixon's handling of the Vietnam war, a recent Social Security increase, extension of the military draft and Ralph Nader.

Curtis' presentation in the Nebraska Union was frequently interrupted with applause, grumbles or catcalls by members of the audience.

The 67-year-old Curtis is seeking his fourth six-year term in the U.S. Senate. Prior to his election to the Senate in 1954, he served eight terms in the House of Representatives starting in 1938.

Republican Curtis faces State Senator Terry Carpenter, the Democratic candidate, in the Nov. 7 general election.

Commenting on reports of a possible Vietnam cease-fire, Curtis said he has "been of the opinion in the last several weeks that the end of the war was near."

Curtis said his concern for an end to the Vietnam conflict was "second only" to concern for prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action.

"When Nixon was sworn into office, American casualties were 300 per week," the veteran lawmaker said. He noted that figure has been reduced to a handful per week currently.

When Curtis added that "one American casualty was too many," he was interrupted by an unidentified member of the audience who asked: "What about Vietnamese?"

Curtis declined to answer at that point but asked the individual to pose the question later.

"I supported Nixon program because it worked," he added in reference to the president's Southeast Asian policy.

The Republican incumbent told those present he nearly voted against an extension of the military draft during the last session of Congress.

Saying he has supported the draft in the past because he felt it "necessary," Curtis said, "I do not want the draft to become a permanent part of America."

Following his short address, Curtis opened the floor for questions and quickly found many present in the room disagreed with his position on several subjects.

When one individual questioned the senator about why President Nixon hadn't brought about a peace settlement in Vietnam four years ago, Curtis replied: "I'm not for continuing the war. I think the quest for peace has been occupying his (Nixon's) mind for four years."

"War is such an awful thing," he added, saying he doubted the American people would vote for anyone who wanted to continue such a conflict.

Another questioner asked the senator about his position on Gen. John Lavelle who appeared before a Congressional committee to answer charges that he ordered unauthorized bombings of North Vietnam.

Curtis replied that civilian leaders get a nation into war and that the public should not be too harsh on a soldier who is pro-American and against the enemy.



Curtis... "I supported the Nixon program because it worked."

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Last chance

Today is the last day students have to register to vote in the Nov. 7 general election. Students can register until 4:30 p.m. in the election commissioner's office at the City-County Building, 10th and J Streets.

Presidential candidates avoid abortion issue

by Chris Harper

Amid the volumes of speeches that spew forth during a presidential election, sexual issues generate little verbosity. The 1972 race is no exception to the traditional "hands off" policy on sex.

Both President Nixon and Sen. George McGovern have confronted the abortion issue only once during the campaign.

Last May, Nixon endorsed the campaign to repeal New York's liberal abortion law. In New York an abortion can be performed during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy after consultation between the patient and her physician.

"From personal and religious beliefs I consider abortion an unacceptable form of population control," Nixon wrote.

News analysis of the author

Many political observers said they believed Nixon's intervention may have been an attempt to get votes from New York's Catholic Democrats. In the final week of the New York legislature's

session, the assembly by a vote of 79 to 68 and the Senate by 30 to 27 voted for repeal of the 1970 law. Gov. Nelson Rockefeller split with the President and vetoed the bill.

Nixon also ignored the pro-abortion recommendations of the President's Commission on Population Control chaired by Rockefeller's brother, John.

The relative importance of the abortion issue to McGovern might be indicated by its placement in his campaign planners' notebooks. Abortion occupies three paragraphs under miscellaneous issues in section 'W' at the end of the manual.

Although most of McGovern's proposals would emanate from the White House, he said he believes that the abortion issue should be the state's responsibility.

"I have long opposed federal legislation on abortion," McGovern said. "This issue should not be inflamed, but argued by proponents of all sides in an atmosphere of mutual respect and in the confidence that moral wisdom and good order will prevail. I do not believe in abortion on demand. But I do believe that each person should be free to decide what personal care to take, in consultation with doctors, confidants, counselors or others in keeping with state laws."

Both the Socialist Worker's Party headed by Linda Jenness and the People's Party led by Benjamin Spock have endorsed liberalized abortion laws.

Why have the major presidential candidates said little about abortion? Perhaps the issue is too volatile.

In an Omaha World Herald poll of 1,140 Nebraskans last May, 55 per cent said they favored changing Nebraska's abortion laws to make the operation a decision between patient and physician, while 35 per cent opposed a change and 10 per cent had no opinion.

Although no one records illegal abortions, Business Week estimates that nearly one million are performed annually. Another 500,000 legal operations are performed in the 17 states that have more liberal abortion laws. Therefore each year at least three million Americans are directly affected by abortion laws, plus parents, doctors and personal friends who are indirectly involved with a woman's abortion.

An estimated 400 women died last year from illegal abortions. Another 350,000 were admitted to hospitals for damage reportedly caused by illegal abortions, Business Week said.

But each presidential candidate has addressed the abortion issue only once during the 1972 campaign.

