

Some consider abortion amendment unnecessary

Atrocious, but inconsequential, is how some described the Nebraska Legislature's abortion amendment to the state's proposed criminal code.

The amendment, added last week and sponsored by Neligh Sen. John DeCamp, would require a woman receiving an abortion to state in writing that her doctor has

informed her of abortion consequences and alternatives.

According to the law, the statement would be placed in the woman's medical file, by law open only to her and her doctor.

Lincoln Sen. Shirley Marsh, an opponent to the amend-

ment, said, "They have passed it and made the right-to-life people happy, but what good is it?"

DeCamp said the amendment was designed to help protect doctors against charges of misinformation by the patient. This amendment will prevent patients from claiming that an abortion was performed without their complete consent.

"Information I've gotten indicates there is a problem of misinformation between doctors and abortion patients," DeCamp said.

Marsh and Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, another opponent to the amendment, said they have heard of no such complaints.

Diarte Kimmons, clinic director of Women's Services, an Omaha abortion clinic, said doctors there go out of their way to be sure the patient really wants an abortion before one is performed. Kimmons also questioned the constitutionality and the enforceability of the amendment.

Terry Theu, executive director of Lincoln's Planned Parenthood called the amendment atrocious and said she could see no reason for it.

"If they (legislators) would spend as much time, money and energy on alternatives to abortion as they are fighting for something they know is unconstitutional, we'd be better off. They could cut down on abortions that way," she said.

Chambers said the amendment is not necessary to protect doctors. Informed consent statements, indicating the patient approves surgery before it is performed, already are required by law for all medical procedures. He said the additional "lecturing" about alternatives to abortion required by this amendment put undue pressure on women.

Chambers said he thinks the majority of the legislators are not against abortion, but are bowing to pressure from Roman Catholic groups.

DeCamp said that "to say the abortion amendment was added because a majority of the legislature is against abortion is an oversimplification. There are those who believe abortion is more than a surgical operation," he said.

The amendment does not belong in the law because Nebraska's state laws should be as constitutional as possible, Marsh said.

"A group of men who don't agree with the constitution should not try to inflict their will on the rest of us," Marsh said.

DeCamp agreed that the Supreme Court has ruled some things constitutional and some unconstitutional, but "they leave unanswered questions," he said. In those areas where the federal abortion law has left gaps, we can place restrictions where we feel they are warranted," DeCamp said.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Neligh Sen. John DeCamp and Waverly Sen. Roland Luedtke discuss the abortion section of the state's revised criminal code.

Varner plans UNL fund drive

Former NU President D.B. Varner, currently chairman and chief executive officer of the NU Foundation, is planning a fund-raising campaign for the university which should be ready by the end of April, he said.

Varner, who assumed his new post Jan. 1, is responsible for raising funds from private and business sources with the Foundation.

Interim NU President Ronald Roskens and campus chancellors are working with Varner to determine NU's

highest priorities and areas of need, Varner said.

He predicted a major share of the money raised will be spent "toward strengthening academic programs."

The campaign will be a "broad scale appeal" to Nebraskans and particularly focused toward NU alumni, faculty members and students, he added.

Predicting the goal will be "a substantial amount," Varner said he was not in a position to cite a more specific sum yet.

Earthquake-monitoring study headed by UNL professor

UNL will participate in a federal earth-monitoring program designed to evaluate earthquake activity in 14 eastern states for consideration in nuclear power plant construction.

UNL's project on the

fringe of the Nemaha Uplift network of Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, is headed by Russell Smith, UNL associate professor of geology.

Although most of the states in the network are in

the eastern United States, results from Nebraska's study may show areas of land movement in the state. These land movements would make it dangerous to build plants there, Smith said.

Through efforts of the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division, Smith said, UNL received funds for the project from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which is financing the networks. The federal program has been operating for about three years, but UNL only recently joined the program, he said.

A seismographic station which earlier could not be supported by UNL's Geology Dept. can now be established and modifications can be made on existing equipment, he said.

Smith said UNL will use three seismometers and a recorder loaned by the federal government and three seismometers donated by the Walter Behlen family of Columbus. Three seismometers will operate in a specially constructed \$6,000 vault in Morrill Hall.

Three project sites outside Lincoln will be chosen by Smith on the basis of freedom from surface vibration for placement of the other equipment. The value of the equipment, including the Behlen donation, is about \$25,000.

Smith said he hopes the equipment in Morrill Hall will be in operation by April 1.

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