

Silent procession protests abortion ruling

By Tam Lee

A human rights amendment to the United States Constitution is the goal of an estimated 500 men, women and children who gathered Saturday to protest the 1973 Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion.

People of all ages waited in near-zero degree weather at 10th and P streets for the walk to the Capitol. Some carried signs, many wore buttons, and nearly all wore green armbands to symbolize hope.

Thirteen Lincoln police officers directed traffic and led the silent procession down O Street to Centennial Mall.

Waiting in the rotunda balconies at the Capitol were about 35 "pro-choice" people silently holding signs to protest the anti-abortion rally. Some were organized by the National Organization for Women and some represented only themselves. A few women dangled coat hangers attached to strings above the crowd in the rotunda.

A NOW press release stated that the demonstration's purpose was to re-emphasize NOW's support for each woman's abortion right. NOW also is concerned that if abortion is made illegal, women will be injured by unsafe, illegal abortions, and that more unwanted children will lead to more child abuse cases, according to the news release.

State Sens. Donald Dworak of Columbus and Bernice Labeledz of Omaha, co-sponsors of a resolution calling for a constitutional convention to eliminate abortion on demand, spoke to the group.

Dr. Carolyn Gerster, chairman of the board of the National Right to Life Committee, compared abortion with the Nazi murder of Jews, elderly and sick people.

She said the Natural Death Act, a law passed by some states allowing terminally ill persons to reject being kept alive by "extraordinary means," is the first step toward euthanasia, or mercy killing.

Although abortion supporters claim that legalized abortion does not lead to euthanasia, she said. "Euthanasia follows abortion as the night follows the day."

Referring to "pro-choice," Gerster said: "The right to choose death for your child makes a mockery of the words 'free' and 'choice.'"

George Olmer, president of Lincoln Right to Life, said after the meeting that the organization had taken a stand on mercy killing because it was directly related to abortion. Neither fetuses nor sick people can defend themselves, he said.

The group has not taken a stand on other life and death issues such as capital punishment, he said, because criminals have legal protection and fetuses do not.



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