

Abortion ruling gets reaction from religious organizations

By Steve Miller

The recent court affirmation that some state abortion laws are unconstitutional has only been partially reviewed, said Assistant Attorney General Jerry Fennell.

Portions of the abortion laws were ruled unconstitutional by U.S. District Judge Warren Urbom.

The requirements that minors must consult their parents, that women seeking abortions must wait 48 hours after making a request, and that physicians must inform patients of consequences of the abortion were ruled unconstitutional.

Urbom rejected the challenges issued by religious groups asking reconsideration of the abortion laws, and this was upheld by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Some religious groups see this as an inhibition of their religious rights.

Fennell said he could not yet comment on the review of the decision. An appeal may be made to the U.S. Supreme Court after a review is completed, he said.

He also said a Lincoln hearing tomorrow on the abortion statutes would deal with a challenge made to the viability sections of the acts.

Viability is defined in the law as the ability for a fetus to live outside the mother. The challenge pertains to the regulation of abortion after viability and what acts a doctor must take if a live fetus results from an abortion.

The coordinator for the Nebraska chapter of the Religious Coalition for

Abortion Rights said she could not help but agree with the ruling.

Kappie Weber said the Nebraska Legislature had attempted to block women from getting abortions by installing obstacles in the law.

"It is a far-fetched requirement that the doctor has to present facts, figures and pictures about the consequences of abortion," Weber said. "There is no similar law about live births or appendectomies."

Weber said that her understanding of Urbom's ruling on inhibiting religious freedom was that he did not really understand the issues, that perhaps there wasn't enough information.

She explained that the coalition represented some 13 denominations in the United States that take a pro-choice stand.

Doug Novak, president of the UNL Students for Life, said that abortion is not a religious issue but a civil rights issue.

"When the Supreme Court ruled that the unborn fetus is not a person it was similar to a ruling once that blacks are not people," Novak said.

Novak said he thought it strange that a minor does not have to have permission for an abortion but does have to have permission to have an operation because of complications from an abortion.

He said consequences should be explained to women and that alternatives to abortion should be stressed.

"If I were a doctor I'd certainly want to inform a patient of consequences whether it be an abortion or an appendectomy," Novak said.

Show features Star of Bethlehem

Historical research has shed new light on the dating of the birth of Jesus in the search to answer the question "What was the Star of Bethlehem?" The search was led by Los Angeles' Griffith Observatory.

UNL's Ralph Mueller Planetarium has created a new program based on the research. The show starts Dec. 13 and will show Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30 and 3:45 p.m.

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