



Staff photos by Craig Andresen

Clockwise from top: About 2,000 people gathered at 15th and P streets for a pro-life rally; featured speaker Dr. Marilyn Johnson; Omaha Mayor Mike Boyle also spoke at the rally.

PRO-LIFE RALLY

A time to mourn, to rise up in action

By Kristi Lynch

Marking the 10th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, about 2,000 people silently walked from the Federal Building, 100 Centennial Mall North, to the Capitol Building Saturday to show their opposition to the law and their sorrow for the unborn children of abortion.

Omaha Mayor Mike Boyle told the crowd to "recall in spirit all of the young children, as we decide to be silent no more."

Dr. Marilyn Johnson, instructor of obstetrics and gynecology at Baylor University's College of Medicine in Waco, Texas, was the featured speaker during a rally at Pershing Auditorium following the walk.

"This horrendous tragedy, which has ripped America since the ill-fated decision of the Supreme Court on January 1973, legalizing abortion of our unborn children for any reason, has resulted in a decade of sadness," she said.

Johnson told the crowd that it "is the time to weep; it is a time to mourn, but it is also time for us to rise up in action."

"This anniversary of the perpetration of disregard for human life is the time to mourn," she said.

Sen. Bernice Labeledz of Omaha and Loran Schmit of Bellwood also spoke at the rally. Labeledz said she has told reporters that pro-life demonstrators have had "a great deal" of effect on what she is doing in the Legislature.

"When you stand up there and you have so much opposition on the floor (of the Legislature), you know that there are thousands and thousands of people in Nebraska that are standing behind you," she said.

Labeledz said the only pro-life legislation that will be introduced in the Legislature this year is a bill opposing wrongful-life and wrongful-birth lawsuits.

In a wrongful-life lawsuit, a child sues his parents or doctor, claiming that because of a handicap, he should not have been born. A wrongful-birth suit is

filed by the parents or family member against the doctor or medical personnel. It states that the doctor was negligent in not informing them that their child would be imperfect or handicapped. Labeledz urged voters to support LB563, introduced by Schmit and Sen. Sam Cullan of Hemingford, which would prohibit these suits.

Schmit asked the people to strengthen their position and cause by broadening their support for the child from time of birth throughout life.

Ellen Snoddy, secretary of the Lincoln Right to Life Committee, said there is a controversy concerning what most Americans' beliefs about abortion are. She said the press shows that most people believe a woman should have the right to have an abortion.

"As people are becoming aware of the facts, that the baby is more than just a clump of cells, more are changing their minds," she said.

Snoddy said she thinks the reason for the inconsistency in polls is that the outcomes depend on the way the questions are asked.

The Jan. 24 issue of U.S. News & World Report shows the difference between two surveys. One was worded "a pregnant woman should have the right to decide whether she wants to terminate a pregnancy." Seventy percent of the respondents agreed. Another survey asked for opinions on a constitutional amendment, which would be for "protecting the life of the unborn child." Fifty percent said they would agree to this amendment.

A call-in poll by KMTV in Omaha reported 1,400 views voting that abortion should be more difficult to obtain, and 800 voting that it should not. The station called this a "turn-around" from past surveys.

Snoddy said women in Nebraska are able to obtain abortions. However, because Lincoln has no abortion clinics, a woman wanting an abortion must obtain it from a doctor in his office.

Snoddy said abortion is legal during all nine months of pregnancy, although some states may restrict abortions sought during the second trimester of pregnancy. Nebraska has no such restriction.

Senator introduces bill proposing that UNL football team get paid for play

By Mona Koppleman

Future Cornhusker football teams could play for pay if a bill sponsored by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers becomes law.

Chambers introduced LB211, which would classify university football players as university employees.

A similar proposal brought to the Legislature in the past by Chambers met with little success. This version of the bill includes a 12-point "statement of purpose" that he said he hopes will "clarify the issue."

"It's not a philosophical issue with me," Chambers said. "I want the players to know I'm in their corner."

The bill states that the university employs "a sizable football coaching staff" whose job is primarily to produce a team "capable of competing successfully with the best in their conference and in the nation" and to "generate the largest possible income."

The bill recognizes the importance of a winning football team to UNL's overall business as an institution, a program that "could not exist without the athletes who play the arduous and sometimes dangerous game."

The bill goes on to state that athletes are actively recruited and scholarships awarded for "athletic prowess," not academic achievement.

"Football players are given little incentive to be scholars and few persons care how they perform academically as long as eligibility is maintained," states Section 8 of LB211.

"Football players are entitled to some tangible return for the strenuous work they perform and the revenue they generate for the benefit of the university," according to the bill.

"It's (LB211) illegal as hell," said Michael Corgan, assistant football coach.

"It's a violation of NCAA ruling," Corgan said. "It wouldn't be a Nebraska thing, it has to be nationwide."

The bill acknowledges UNL's NCAA membership. However, it provides that "in the same manner that academic students may be paid for performing various tasks while a student, football players should be paid for playing football."

Section 12 of the bill states that "any person who competes in the sport for (UNL) shall be an employee of (UNL) and shall be compensated and entitled to the same rights and benefits as other university employees.

"Nothing in this section shall be construed to make such a person a professional athlete," the bill concludes.

Donald Bryant, assistant athletic director, said the bill would "fly in the face of the Big Eight Conference, NCAA, and other amateur sports rules and regulations."

"We view them (football players) as students on scholarships like students on engineering scholarships or any other kind of scholarships," Bryant said. "We don't view them as professional athletes, so obviously we wouldn't see eye to eye with the senator."

"If that bill became law and went into effect and those people were declared employees of the athletic department and received pay, then they would be declared ineligible and there wouldn't be any football team," Bryant said. "You can't play for pay."

Chambers said he thinks benefits prohibited by the NCAA were being received "by subterfuge." He said this is not uncommon in college athletics, and has caused many collegiate coaches to favor pay for athletes, among them Digger Phelps of Notre Dame.

In response to Corgan and Bryant, Chambers said, "That is generally the reaction to this bill by people who don't understand its profound implications."

"Nebraska may be close to number one in football," Chambers said, "but Nebraska may be next to number nothing in understanding this (bill) until it becomes reality."

"The irony will be when some other state beats Nebraska in implementing an idea that originated in Nebraska," Chambers said.