

Examining the Past, Looking to the Future

By Dave Andrusko

Let me begin by explaining why the November edition of National Right to Life News arrived so late. Since we publish Today's News & Views daily but NRL News once a month, it only made sense to me to wait until we could include complete coverage of the November 7 elections, an analysis of the November 8 oral arguments before the United States Supreme Court on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, and an explication of some of the fall-out from each. I think you'll agree this was the prudent thing to do, especially in light of my assurance that the December issue will be on time.

As I promised in Today's News & Views the morning after the elections, our take would be candid. We do not sugarcoat the losses in the House and Senate. But being candid is not the same as losing hope or failing to grasp the bigger long-term picture. (See also, stories on pages 1, 3, and 10)

When you read the stories on page one, you will come away with two critically important pieces of information. The first is a clear explanation of what transpired election night. You really do need to know the rest of the story.

The second—and one that is a great credit to you—is that without your gritty determination, the outcome would have been far, far worse. A number of pro-lifers "should" have lost, given the dynamics of the election, but didn't purely because of your assistance in their hour of need. Your unflinching commitment made the difference.

The House is now in the hands of Democrats whose leadership is pro-abortion, as are most caucus members. The "genius" of Congressman Rahm Emanuel (who headed the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee) was to recruit candidates who said little specifically but who made all the right-sounding gestures. This allowed them to appeal in culturally conservative areas of the South and Midwest. In many cases their real views remain oblique, when not a complete mystery.

What to expect? We've already read/heard endless assurances that the new pro-abortion leadership will pursue a legislative agenda that is "moderate," "middle of the road," aimed at "the center," or a dozen other similar iterations. All are interchangeable monikers the press has ascribed to many/most of the incoming members of the House whose electoral victories gave Democrats control by 30 or so votes.

We were also told that one new member in the Senate and a few (roughly six) in the House are "pro-life." We'll see whether this alleged moderation extends to the party's position on abortion and whether these newcomers, in fact, vote pro-life.

But even if this tiny minority of incoming Democrats (along with incumbent Democrats who have a pro-life voting record) is genuine, the House leadership from top to bottom is staffed with clones of Nancy Pelosi, the incoming Speaker of the House. The pro-abortionists who control the caucus can afford to throw a bone to pro-lifers. Even assuming some of these

newcomers are genuinely pro-life, they will hardly be in a position to make a difference when it comes to legislation.

Speaking of which, how much would you bet that a party which has fought every pro-life measure tooth and nail—no matter how moderate or middle of the road or centrist it may have been—will suddenly discover the virtues of the pro-life perspective?

My guess is this is one lion that will continue devouring every lamb it can get its jaws around.

In addition, Democrats gained a net of six in the Senate, putting control in the hands of pro-abortion hawks. The outcome in the House was not a surprise. The net loss of six in the Senate—and therefore control—was a shocker.

In addition, parental notification proposals failed in California and Oregon. Meanwhile in Missouri, voters by a margin of less than 50,000 votes (out of over 2,000,000 cast) approved Amendment Two which places the right to clone in the state Constitution. (See story, page 23.)

Finally, last March South Dakota passed a law that, had it gone into effect, would have banned abortion unless necessary to prevent the death of the mother. It was immediately enjoined.

In addition, state law allows citizens to enact or repeal legislation by placing it on the ballot. A coalition of pro-abortionists secured enough signatures to have the law placed on the November 7 ballot and voters rejected the pro-life law, 55% to 45%. (See story, page 8.)

That's the short-term unpleasantness. But those of us—you and me—who take the long view realize that there are encouraging undercurrents that don't make the headlines.

Without rehearsing the mega-trends that dominated this election, things will be different in 2008. Candidates who were carried into office in hotly contested races will have to defend their records two years from now. And they will be watched carefully.

Not a lot of people outside of Washington know that National Right to Life is responsible for passage of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, about which the Supreme Court heard oral arguments November 8. Likewise, the amount of activity that National Right to Life's Political Action Committee undertook on behalf of a large, large number of candidates was simply staggering.

As Karen Cross makes clear on page one, NRL PAC's work on behalf of pro-life candidates meant that in countless races, the electorate knew who the pro-life candidate was and who the pro-abortion candidate was. That advantage among voters who made a candidate's position on abortion the decisive issue resulted in a number of wins for pro-life candidates even in instances where he or she was facing a decidedly uphill battle.

And Fr. Frank Pavone, head of Priests for Life, did an excellent job highlighting the trends that continue apace, independent of elections. The trends moving in our direction include

- opinion polls about abortion;
- the declining number of abortions, abortionists, and abortion mills;
- the strong new motivation of our young pro-life activists who know they are abortion survivors;
- the growing voice of women and men harmed by abortion, who contradict its promise of "benefit";
- the evidence in science about who the child is;

the medical evidence that abortion is no benefit to women;
the sociological evidence that abortion is no benefit to society; and
a new wave of clergy who are more ready for the pro-life battle than ever.

November 7 was tough, no two ways about it. But what sticks in my mind is a theme that more and more is cropping up in the comments of nervous abortion advocates.

Far more than does the media, and almost as well as we do, they understand that you and I will NEVER go away, NEVER give up. They are most unhinged by the growing pro-life sentiment among young people. That is the subject of our special January 22 commemorative issue. (See page 5.)

We wanted to win, not for us, but for the sake of the babies. But elections are like buses; another one will come along soon enough. And what we lost a few weeks ago we will begin to take back then. Count on it.

Thank you for all you did and continue to do. We will prevail, not because you or I are righteous, but because the cause to which we have devoted our lives is.

If you have any questions or comments, please write me at daveandrusko@hotmail.com.