

Congress' pro-life freshman class optimistic about chances for influence



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The impact pro-life voters had on last fall's midterm election was evident in the success of congressional candidates who campaigned on the promise to uphold the sanctity of human life. Now those candidates-turned-officeholders are looking to make their impact as members of the 108th Congress.

Thirty-five of the 54 freshmen representatives and eight of the 10 first-term senators

elected in November have declared themselves to be pro-life, bolstering a House that already was strong on life issues and adding key votes to a Senate that wasn't. The bottom line? Bills banning partial-birth abortion and human cloning, which passed the House handily last term only to die in the Senate, have a good chance to make it into law this term.

"I think partial-birth abortion is gone this year," said Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., one of the freshman class's

staunchest pro-lifers. "In a fundamental sense, we have a more pro-life Congress than we've had in a long time. I absolutely believe that we should be more encouraged than ever before in terms of the day coming when we will restore protection to unborn children."

One of the more encouraging signs is that the freshman pro-life contingent isn't exclusively Republican. Four of the House's new pro-lifers are Democrats—Democrats who say their

party leadership knows they will not compromise their moral convictions for the party line.

One of them is Lincoln Davis of Tennessee, who said he has told House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, an unabashed pro-abortion liberal, that he will "always vote my conscience" on life and family issues. And on those issues, his conscience couldn't be more clear.

"There has never been a time in my life, from the first time that I have been able to

Representing life

Among the freshman class of the 108th Congress, these four representatives are among the strongest pro-life voices.



Rep. Marilyn Musgrave
R-Colo.

Age: 53

Career: Teacher; homemaker; hay-stacking company owner.

Previous elected office: Fort Morgan school board, 1990-94; Colorado House, 1994-98; Colorado Senate, 1998-2002.

Why are you pro-life? "I became a Christian at a very young age, and I just think that life is a gift from God, that we honor our Creator when we're pro-life."

How can we pray for you? "That I would stand up for my conservative social and fiscal beliefs."



Rep. Trent Franks
R-Ariz.

Age: 45

Career: Small business owner; family policy council director.

Previous elected office: Arizona House, 1984-86

Why are you pro-life? "When I was in high school and we saw *Roe v. Wade* come down, the issue affected me so deeply that I began to give speeches about how we'd taken away protection for these little babies."

How can we pray for you? "Pray for the president every day, because he is God's man for our country."

analyze abortion, that I didn't know it was wrong," Davis told *Citizen*. In fact, his convictions are so strong that he allows for zero exceptions—not for rape or incest, nor for the life of the mother.

"It's not just the mother's life that's in jeopardy in those cases; it's in God's hands," he explained.

"I don't want to become God myself, so I don't think

there's ever an exception for an abortion."

Davis' commitment to the cause extends far beyond the pro-life legislation he'll be voting on, though. He's also convinced the time could be ripe for a victory on an issue he won't get to vote on—the addition of a strongly pro-life candidate to the U.S. Supreme Court. That's a matter handled by the Senate.



Rep. Rodney Alexander
D-La.

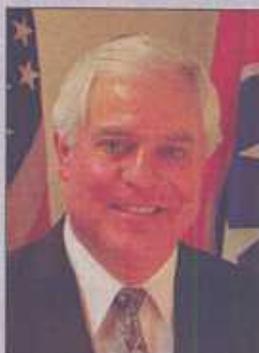
Age: 56

Career: Construction contractor

Previous elected office: Louisiana House, 1987-2002

Why are you pro-life? "I grew up in church. My mother, still living, for 51 years she's been an ordained Church of God minister. I just think life is the most precious thing that God offers us."

How can we pray for you? "Simply by doing it. We're facing some times right now that we've never faced before. It's time, for those of us who believe that getting on our knees is important, that we do that."



Rep. Lincoln Davis
D-Tenn.

Age: 59

Career: Businessman; farmer

Previous elected office: Byrds-town mayor, 1978-82; Tennessee House, 1980-84; Tennessee Senate, 1996-2002

Why are you pro-life? "My wife and I have three grown daughters, but we also have two other children. In the first trimester, [my wife] had a miscarriage. So we have, I have no doubt in my mind, two children waiting in heaven on us when we get there."

How can we pray for you? "Just remember us any way you'd like—but remember us. In America today, our leaders on the local level all the way through to Washington probably need America's prayers more than we ever have."

"The Supreme Court today has nine members—one of those, [Chief Justice William] Rehnquist, is a Nixon appointee," he said. "Ford had one, three by Reagan, two by Bush and two by Bill Clinton. We got seven of the nine that are supposedly conservative judges. The next nominee, I think, there ought to be at least some knowledge that that person

has an understanding of life."

Does the influx of eight new pro-lifers and the shift of power from Democrats to Republicans in the Senate mean there are now enough votes in the upper chamber to confirm such a nominee? Davis' fellow pro-life Democrat, Rodney Alexander of Louisiana, thinks so.

"I think we'll see a change on the Supreme Court to lead

us more in that direction," Alexander predicted. "I think you and I will see that [a Supreme Court justice to overturn *Roe v. Wade*] before long. Maybe not this term, but while President Bush is in office."

Regardless of what they accomplish legislatively in the next two years, though, the House's pro-life freshmen believe their election is just one of many signs that the values they cherish are taking deeper root across America. Other signs include polls that show most Americans believe life begins at conception and advances in sonogram technology that show the undeniable humanity of a child in the womb.

"The tide of public opinion is changing," Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., told *Citizen*. "You see more and more younger individuals that are pro-life, and that's very encouraging to me."

That encouragement comes not a moment too soon.

"If we don't restore protection to the most helpless in our society, then it certainly endangers everyone in our society," Franks explained.

"In a society that kills its own children, you wonder what real moral foundation we have for survival, if that situation is allowed to continue."

WHO TO CONTACT:

Encourage your representative and senators to support the pro-life bills expected to be introduced this term, among them the Human Cloning Prohibition Act, the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act, the Child Custody Protection Act and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. To find contact information quickly, visit Focus on the Family's Legislative Action Center at www.citizenlink.org.

Abortion clinics not exempt from child-abuse rules

After two months of not commenting, California Attorney General Bill Lockyer made a decision last fall: Privacy concerns do not exempt Golden State abortion clinics from reporting suspected child sexual abuse or statutory rape.

The ruling, issued by Deputy Attorney General Paul Ament, says: "There is a reporting requirement when the female minor is under 16 years of age and the man impregnating her is 21 years of age or older; the female minor is under the age of 14 years; or when the female minor is 14 or 15 years old, and the man impregnating her is at least 10 years older than her." Physicians and abortionists, however, are not required to make a report to the state when the pregnant girl is 16 or 17.

The question arose in Sep-

tember, when Medical Board of California chief David Thornton asked Lockyer's office to eliminate any confusion surrounding privacy and mandated reporting laws.

The ruling was good news for Richard Ackerman, an attorney with the United States Justice Foundation in Escondido, as he faced the first round of hearings in a case against Planned Parenthood in early December.

"We have a lawsuit pending over this issue," he told *Citizen*. "I'm expecting Planned Parenthood to claim that privacy outweighs chasing down child molesters, and I've got a letter in hand from the Attorney General saying it doesn't work that way. It's fantastic. I couldn't be happier."

"For the first time in a long time, there are some chinks in the Planned Parenthood armor, and we're going to run the sword right through them."

Ackerman's lawsuit is based in part on a report issued by Life Dynamics Inc.

(LDI) last summer, in which an undercover sting operation revealed that Planned Parenthood and National Abortion Federation clinic workers understand they are required by law to report sexual activity involving minors, yet conceal that information from authorities much of the time.

LDI is following that investigation with a new project, Eyewitness, aimed at helping sidewalk counselors report underage girls who go into abortion clinics, rather than relying on clinic workers to do so. A manual and training video, available on request from LDI, offer tips on dealing with hostile or unmotivated police officers. More than 600 people had called requesting the kit by late November, LDI President Mark Crutcher said.

"It's going to take a while for us to really see the kind of progress from this that we hope to," he said. "We're just in the beginning stages of this project, but it's really gaining a lot of steam."

Court declares teen right to sex, privacy

Minors who have sex in their parents' homes—even when their parents object to it—have a right to privacy that supersedes Mom and Dad's authority, the Georgia Supreme Court has ruled.

In a unanimous decision in January, the court said a 16-year-old girl and her 17-year-old boyfriend had "a fundamental constitutional right to be 'let alone' in the girl's bedroom. The two were having sex when the girl's mother entered the room; charges were filed under Georgia's 130-year-old fornication statute, a little-enforced law that prohibits sex between unmarried people.

"Courts have described Georgia's right to privacy as, among other things, 'the protection of the individual from unnecessary public scrutiny' . . . and 'the right to define one's circle of intimacy,'" Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher wrote in his majority opinion.

The girl was clearly trying to keep the tryst private, Fletcher added, because she propped

a stool against the door in an unsuccessful attempt to keep her mother out.

"To say that a 16-year-old, by putting a chair under the door, is entitled to have sex in her parent's home, is ludicrous," said Sadie Fields, state chairman of the Christian Coalition of Georgia. "Parental rights are becoming less and less supported than the state's decision on how our children can behave and how we can raise them."

To stem that tide, Fields said when the Peach State holds its next Supreme Court election in 2004, the Christian Coalition will produce a guide letting voters know where justices and justice hopefuls stand on family issues. She encouraged activists in other states to do the same.

"It's our understanding [that legally] we can ask questions based on previous decisions, not anything that might be coming up," Fields said. "Anything that helps voters not go into the voting booths blind will be a benefit."

WHO TO CONTACT: To find out how you can provide voter guides for your city or state, contact the Christian Coalition at P.O. Box 37030, Washington, DC 20013-7030; phone 202-479-6900; Web www.cc.org.