

RNC *For Life* REPORT

A Publication of the Republican National Coalition for Life

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Countdown To Convention 2008

Our plans have been in the works for months as we prepare for the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN. As tensions increase within the Republican Party, with presumptive nominee John McCain holding views that are in many cases out of sync with those of pro-lifers and conservatives in general, we are traveling a bumpy road.

John McCain has a pro-life voting record according to the National Right to Life Committee scorecard. But, unlike those of us who have labored long in the pro-life movement, he does not want abortion to once again be illegal. Instead, he favors legal abortion for babies conceived through rape or incest. In addition, John McCain supports taxpayer-funded research that requires the killing of innocent human embryos, and he voted to expand taxpayer funding for embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) beyond that allowed by the Bush administration.

It cannot be said, as some have, that John McCain is strongly pro-life. His votes and oft-stated views reflect a desire to restrict and regulate the practice of abortion without prohibiting it.

In **1976**, at the first Republican National Convention after the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down, the Delegates adopted a Platform that stated support for the “*efforts of those who seek a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children.*”

Then, in **1980**, the Platform statement on the right to life was strengthened to include “support for congressional efforts to restrict the use of *taxpayers’ dollars for abortion.*” This language was added due to the leadership of RNC/Life national chairman Phyllis Schlafly and the late congressional pro-life champion Rep. Henry Hyde.

By **1984**, with President Ronald Reagan in office and about to be re-elected in a landslide, pro-life Delegates increased in numbers commensurate with the growth of the Republican Party nationwide. The platform plank was further strengthened to say: “*The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and*

we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion.”

At the **1988** convention, then-Vice President George H.W. Bush assumed the Reagan mantle as the nominee. The Platform Committee strengthened the plank again when Committee members adopted language affirming the Party’s “*support for the appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary*



Countdown continued on next page

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Please visit our web site at <http://www.rncliforg>

who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of human life.”

In 1990, Republicans for Choice, formed by Washington, D.C. fundraiser Ann Stone, set into motion a well-funded effort to remove the pro-life plank from the Platform. Shortly thereafter, the **Republican National Coalition for Life** organized to defeat the pro-abortion wing of the Party, and we have succeeded at every National Convention since. In 1992/Houston, 1996/San Diego, 2000/Philadelphia, and 2004/New York, the pro-life Platform Plank has been readopted, without change. RNC/Life will be in St. Paul in 2008 to see to it that it states once again:

“As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence.

That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make it clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.”

While John McCain has said he has no intention of changing the plank, we have no public assurance from him that he would oppose the efforts of the pro-abortion members of the Platform Committee and instruct the committee to leave the pro-life plank as it is.

“If he doesn’t change the platform, then he’s being the same kind of hypocrite that he accused Bush of being in 2000,” said Jennifer Blei Stockman, the co-chairwoman of Republican Majority for Choice in an interview with *ABC News*. Her reference was to a 2000 debate in South Carolina, moderated by Larry King, during which McCain attacked George Bush for his refusal to support a change in the pro-life platform plank that would make an exception

for killing babies conceived through rape or incest, Bush’s own position. As late as 2007, John McCain reaffirmed his desire to weaken the plank.

We fully expect that there will again be a move on the part of pro-abortion Platform Committee members, pro-abortion-choice organizations and individuals, to weaken the pro-life plank. Republicans for choice announced their confidence that they can find common ground with McCain and will be able to “work with him.”

ACTION: Please contact the McCain campaign to ask for his public assurance that he will oppose attempts to weaken or change the Pro-Life plank. <http://www.johnmccain.com/Contact/>

May and June Are Delegate Selection Months

During the month of May Republicans held conventions or state committee meetings in fifteen states according to information we have gathered, and in June, twelve more will occur. Delegates and Alternates to the Republican National Convention will be selected at most of them. The rest of the states select their Delegates via the primary or caucus process.

Have you been selected as a Delegate from your state? Have you been elected to serve on the National Platform Committee by your state delegation? If so, please let us know by sending an e-mail message to rnclife@swbell.net.

The 2008 Republican National Convention will take place September 1 to 4 in St. Paul, MN. The Platform Committee will meet on Monday, August 25 to 27 in Minneapolis. You can access some information about the convention by visiting the official web site: <http://www.gopconvention.com/>

We are The *LIFE* of the Party!

When you think about it, it is absolutely true that the pro-life movement and its grassroots activ-

Life of the Party *continued on next page*

ists gave new life to the Republican Party during the 1970s when the Democrats were in control, not only in Congress and the White House but in many states as well. For instance, in Texas people often comment on the days when the Republican Party of Texas held its primaries in a phone booth, an exaggeration, to be sure, but not much of one.

The life issues energized millions of Americans who, until that time, considered politics to be nothing more than a spectator sport. Once we got involved, we swept the Democrats from power, elected Ronald Reagan as our president and established the Republican Party as the majority party in state after state.

It is the overarching, compelling, fundamental principle that every human being from the moment of conception is worthy of respect and legal protection that gives us the energy to continue in this monumental struggle for justice in our land. As long as the Republican Party retains its commitment to the sanctity of human life through the Platform we have the ability to hold our candidates and elected officials accountable to it. And, if they don't respect the pro-life plank and adhere to it, we have good reason to replace them with others who will!

We are The **LIFE** of the Party ☐

Youth Take Lead For Life

The following letter clearly shows that the pro-life cause will continue full-steam-ahead under the leadership of thousands of young people whose first picture in their baby book is their sonogram photo. Politicians – get ready!

The *Dallas Morning News*: Sunday, April 20, 2008

Over the past year, young people have received much attention for their involvement in the presidential campaigns, showing that youth can be a powerful force. On another front, tens of thousands of youths across the country have become involved in an issue just as important to them as a presidential campaign – the pro-life movement – and are showing that their voices and actions are just as passionate as those on the campaign trail. And, we believe, we're also

changing the hearts of many people.

Still, it seems the media refuse to pay any attention to this particular form of activism among young people.

Along with dozens of others from Dallas, I experienced the vibrancy of the pro-life movement in mid-January during the 35th Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. More than 200,000 people gathered around the Washington Mall to pray for life, but what stood out for me was the large number of high school and college-age students who were there, huddled in the cold, holding hands, praying and marching.

It re-emphasized to me that these are young people with conviction, not “weirdos,” as many times we're stereotyped because of our stance. A recent report from the Guttmacher Institute says that the number of abortions has dropped to 1.2 million a year. That's down 25 percent from a peak in 1990, according to the organization that supports abortions, but whose statistics are accepted as reliable even by many pro-life groups.

Some would say that the decline can be traced back to the morning-after pill that induces miscarriage. But maybe it's because more and more women who become pregnant and are thinking of an abortion are being changed because of prayer and counseling. They realize, like pregnant teenage actress Jaime Lynn Spears, that adoption is an answer. Earlier this month, I joined more than 1,000 people, including hundreds of youths, at Bishop Farrell's Pro-Life dinner. We heard from the bishop, from an unwed high school student who chose to have her child and from Father Frank Pavone, one of the country's leading voices on pro-life. His message was that the youth, as influencers in our generation, are key to spreading the pro-life message across the country and that we have been successful in that effort. The sanctity of life is surely one of the issues that drew thousands of young Americans to celebrate Mass and even meet in small groups this weekend with Pope Benedict XVI.

Sanctity of Life *continued on next page*



For me, pro-life also is a personal mission, driven by my sister Rachel.

In the first few weeks that my mother was pregnant with her, doctors told my parents that the baby had a major heart defect and that she had Down Syndrome. They were told that surgery could correct the heart defect, but that Down Syndrome would require constant care. Abortion, they were told, was an option.

Although they were shocked to hear the news, I remember my parents telling us that abortion was never an option and that they would welcome Rachel as happily into the world as my "normal" brothers and me. Complications forced Rachel to be delivered early on May 8, 1997. She weighed only 2 pounds and spent nearly the next four months in the hospital, gaining weight so she could have heart surgery. She came home for a month, but on the morning of Oct. 22, just as my parents were taking Rachel to the hospital for surgery, I remember waking up and begging them not to take her because, I said, I would never see her again.

Later that night, my parents told us that Rachel had died in their arms after surgery. I cried all night long. We were all devastated. After her death, my parents, their friends and other organizations created a garden at St. Thomas Aquinas to remember the "little angels." I'll always remember Rachel. Many like her, either "not normal" or unwanted because their parents were young, unmarried or poor, I'm sure, have not been given a chance at life. Whenever I visit the garden, I pray for them and always read the inscription on the plaque to inspire me.

It says of Rachel, in part, "...her courageous battle for life inspired community prayer and reaffirmed that every life, despite the hardships, is precious and should be protected."

Mary Elizabeth Sedeño is a junior at the Cambridge School of Dallas and a Student Voices volunteer columnist.




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