

Abortion

Where candidates stand

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Abortion is emerging as a key presidential campaign issue, although the winner in November, whoever he may be, will have little to say about its resolution.

The emotional tenor of the controversy has led most candidates to stake out carefully worded positions, some of which tend to straddle the issue by embracing positions on both sides.

President Ford became the latest presidential candidate to address the issue, saying in a recorded CBS television interview Tuesday that he wants the abortion question thrown back to the states. By contrast, Ronald Reagan, his opponent for the GOP presidential nomination, wants a constitutional amendment to establish a national ban on abortion.

Ford indicated he was sympathetic to a constitutional amendment, without calling for one. Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, called Ford's views "inconsistent and disappointing" but said it would be "unfair to be any more critical of Mr. Ford than of some other prominent political leaders, whose views on the abortion issue appear to be equally confused."

The Supreme Court ruled three years ago that states may not prohibit abortion in the first three months of pregnancy although they retain some regulatory authority thereafter.

Pro- and anti-abortion groups since then have been lobbying, demonstrating and pressuring presidential candidates. Most authorities concede, however, that the only avenue to change is a constitutional amendment, which is the province of Congress and the states.

There already are at least a dozen amendments pending in Congress which would, as Ford suggests, assign responsibility over abortion to the states and let them decide whether to allow or ban it.

Other proposed amendments, the kind supported by Reagan and Democrat George Wallace, would have the effect of restoring the bans generally in effect in the states before the Supreme Court ruling. Those amendments would permit abortions in exceptional cases, such as for rape victims or mothers whose lives are in danger.

Wallace is the only Democratic presidential contender calling for a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. Most say they oppose abortion in principle but support the Supreme Court ruling.

Sargent Shriver, another of the Democratic contenders, has said he finds all of the currently proposed amendments unacceptable but leaves the door open for possibly finding one he could approve.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., has generally opposed amending the Constitution, but says he opposes abortion on principle. He has hinted at returning regulation to the states but has not called for an amendment to accomplish it.

Former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter also says abortion is wrong but opposes any constitutional amendment to prohibit it. "I think the government ought to do everything possible to minimize abortion," Carter said last month, mentioning governmental assistance to prevent pregnancy, including education and birth control aid.

Both Shriver and Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., also have suggested alternative solutions, such as providing more birth control information, child-care programs and health care for young mothers.

While Bayh also has said he morally opposes abortion, he has fought the amendment drive. The Constitution, he says, "must not be used as an instrument for moral preference."

Gov. Milton Shapp, D-Pa., also is among those who say they personally dislike abortion but support the Supreme Court's decision. But he goes beyond most other candidates to de-

fend the right of a woman to decide the question without governmental interference.

Sen. Lloyd M. Bentsen, D-Tex., too, has said he supports the court's decision, but he adds the belief that "the rights of those medical personnel and hospital administrators who have objections to abortion as a matter of conscience must also be observed."

Bentsen, however, has said he does not support an amendment and has proposed no other means of carving out exceptions to the court ruling.

Former Sen. Fred Harris, D-Okla., and Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., both say they support the court ruling and oppose antiabortion amendments.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), the latest Democratic candidate, says he opposes abortion on demand but would permit it in cases of rape or where the woman's life was endangered by pregnancy.

Today in history . . .

Follies, crimes, misfortunes

Associated Press
"History is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind," — said English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794).

Today's highlight in history: On this date in 1789, George Washington was elected the first U.S. president, with all 69 presidential electors casting their votes for the general.

Two hundred years ago today, an outbreak of fighting was feared in New York City as a British ship arrived from occupied Boston with troops aboard, and a force of American troops from Connecticut entered the city.

In 1793, hostilities ended between the United States and England.

In 1861, delegates from six seceding Southern states formed the Confederacy at Montgomery, Ala.

In 1887, the Interstate Commerce Commission was established.

In 1948, the Island of Ceylon became a free, self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth.

In 1961, terrorist attacks broke out in the Portuguese African territory of Angola.

Ten years ago: A Japanese airliner plunged into Tokyo Bay, killing 133 people. It was the

worst single plane crash up to that time.

Five years ago: Egypt announced it would extend a cease-fire with Israel for one month but demanded withdrawal from some occupied Egyptian territory.

One year ago: The U.S. Justice Department proposed stronger measures to prohibit the employment of illegal aliens.



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