

Abortion ruling unleashes debate

WASHINGTON — Opponents of the Supreme Court's ruling that states need not fund elective abortions for poor women signals a return to the backroom butcher. But abortion groups call it a first step to victory.

The decision unleashed a storm of emotional reaction from all sides in

the continuing clash over the abortion issue.

Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., sponsor of a law which bars federal spending for most abortions, said Monday's ruling gives him confidence the justices will uphold it in a pending case.

Advocates of liberalized laws said they would concentrate on blocking

in the Senate a House-passed amendment that would not even allow federal funding for abortions needed to save a mother's life.

Joseph Rauh of Americans for Democratic Action called Monday's ruling "a national tragedy, forcing poor women into back alleys for their abortions." The American Civil Liberties Union said it was

"among the worst decisions by a Supreme Court generally insensitive to individual rights."

A Planned Parenthood official said the court eliminated in 1973 "a two-class system of medical care in abortion — one for the affluent who could often find ways and means to obtain safe abortions even when it was illegal, and one for the poor, who so often fell victim to the back-room butcher."

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., said the court decision was so unfair and discriminatory against poor women that it may "help rather than hurt" those fighting the House-passed legislation.

"Congress can no longer count on the court to take us off the hook. We're going to have a floor fight no matter what we do," he said.

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted, 11 to 0, Monday to make no recommendation to the full Senate on the amendment, but decided afterwards to reconsider its stand later.

The Supreme Court ruled, 6 to 3, a state cannot be forced under the Social Security Act or the Constitution to finance elective abortions for Medicaid patients even though it subsidizes childbirth for needy women.

It said lower courts, which held in Connecticut and Pennsylvania cases that states must fund abortions for poor women, misinterpreted a landmark 1973 decision striking down most anti-abortion laws.

That opinion "did not declare an unqualified constitutional right to abortion," the majority said.

A state may make "childbirth a more attractive alternative," it said, without interfering unduly with a woman's freedom to have an abortion. "She continues as before to be

dependent on private sources for the service she desires," it said.

The court also ruled in favor of St. Louis officials who had been ordered by a lower court to provide abortions for poor women in a city hospital staffed by Roman Catholics.

Over 250,000 abortions a year are federally subsidized at a cost of \$40 million to \$50 million. Funding continues pending Supreme Court action on the Hyde amendment, which may come within a week.

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Fiscal committee accepts Carter's tax rebate plan

WASHINGTON — The House Ways and Means Committee, which led some of President Carter's energy proposals, is giving a warmer reception to the administration's secondary programs to conserve oil and gas.

In its latest action, the committee voted to accept a watered-down version of the President's tax-and-subsidy plan for getting industries to

convert to use of coal and other plentiful fuels.

Earlier, the powerful committee blocked Carter's key proposals for a nickel-a-year hike in the gas tax and a rebate to owners of fuel-efficient cars.

But the committee last week approved a tax on industries using oil and gas, which would generate \$4.6 billion in seven years. Under the committee plan, an estimated \$2.4 billion would be refunded for investments in facilities that do not use oil or gas.

Monday, the committee decided

to offer a choice: a utility or industry could collect a refund up to its full oil-gas tax for the investments that qualified; or it could take an additional 10 per cent investment tax credit, on top of the existing 10 per cent credit.

The extra 10 per cent would go to businesses investing in energy-saving devices, such as solar, geothermal or wind energy mechanisms or other conservation measures.

The Senate Commerce Committee worried about a different oil problem — paying for the messes from offshore oil spills. Representatives from Alaska, New York and Massachusetts Monday urged the committee to set minimum standards governing tanker liability for oil spills and leave it to states to pass stricter laws.

Committee Chairman Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., said federal legislation would not be needed if states passed uniform laws, but some states have no laws at all and many others have unsatisfactory stat-

utes. In other congressional action Monday:

The House Select Committee on Assassinations hired a new chief counsel — Professor G. Robert Blakey — and said it will investigate the slayings of President Kennedy and Rev. Martin Luther King vigorously but secretly. Blakey asked members of the press to "leave us alone for awhile."

The Senate took issue with the Secret Service protection accorded Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal, the only Cabinet member with such treatment. In a report accompanying a bill funding the Treasury Department, the Senate questioned the traditional practice, noting the protection cost more than \$1 million for former Treasury Secretary William Simon alone.

Blumenthal told a Senate Banking subcommittee the Carter administration favors permitting the practice of writing checks on savings accounts. He said an experiment with the practice in six New England states has been successful, and urged that it be allowed nationwide.

County reclaims ambulance; misunderstanding develops

ORDER FROM BRAZOS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RECLAIMING A COUNTY ambulance on loan to College Station that wrecks is all a misunderstanding, city officials said yesterday.

College Station city council members said during their meeting yesterday that the commissioners mistakenly believe the council will

take bids on a new city ambulance. But bids on another ambulance will not be taken unless the county reclaims its ambulance.

Miguel Bravencor Lorence Bravencor said. The council delayed action on the ambulance until tomorrow. An ambulance committee meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. today to discuss the problem.

The council hopes to convince the commissioners to leave the ambulance in College Station instead of moving it to another part of the county.

In other business, Emmett Trant, architect for the city's proposed new police station and warehouse facilities, told the council during yesterday's meeting that expected cost for those buildings will be at least \$83,000 higher than the \$645,000 budgeted for them.

Trant presented initial floor-plans for the police station building to the council during the meeting. After lengthy discussion and one aborted vote the council agreed to delay any decision on the buildings for at least two weeks while they evaluate the plans Trant has prepared.

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