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Pro-lifers vow to fight her confirmation

Abortion foes attack O'Connor

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Sandra Day O'Connor will face painstaking scrutiny of her record as a state legislator and judge at confirmation hearings this week on her nomination as the Supreme Court's first woman justice.

Conservative forces that want President Reagan to withdraw the nomination of the Arizona Appeals Court judge have deluged the Senate Judiciary Committee with about 20,000 pieces of mail — mostly form letters — running 4-to-1 against her.

But Senate leaders have predicted her confirmation, perhaps without dissent, because no senators are on record opposing her.

This has not discouraged abortion foes, who contend they will use the hearings as a forum to show Reagan he "should never insult his friends again."

"No observer of this fight — and it is a fight — should judge by the final number of votes," said Peter Gemma Jr. of the National Pro-Life Political Action Committee.

O'Connor's nomination is a "complete break of faith in light of the promises in the Republican platform," which endorses "pro-life" judges, said Conservative Caucus head Howard Phillips.

Sure to be aired at the hearings, which begin Wednesday, are data on her votes on state abortion bills — votes that are "consistently anti-life," abortion forces charge.

Also, the conservative groups claim O'Connor is too soft on crime, too liberal on women's

issues and has ignored conflicts of interest in voting on areas affecting family interests.

William Billings, director of the National Christian Action Coalition, spent two weeks perusing O'Connor's record in the Arizona Legislature.

His research has been turned over to so-called "pro-life" senators and to United Families of America, which is scheduled to testify during three days of hearings.

Billings said O'Connor favored abortion measures four times, including a 1970 bill that would have legalized abortion three years before the Supreme Court's landmark decision that a woman has a constitutional right to an abortion.

Douglas Johnson of the National Right to Life Committee charged O'Connor misrepresented her relations with "pro-life" forces seeking anti-abortion bills in the Arizona Senate. Dr. Carolyn Gerster, a personal foe of O'Connor's, will review the judge's state legislative record at the hearings.

Gemma said questions about the Arizona judge go beyond the abortion issue.

"Her lack of experience — only 18 months on the state court — would normally be questioned. But she has a lot of important and influential political friends," he said.

A review of O'Connor's record shows she voted against mandatory prison sentencing bills and opposed restoring the death penalty, Billings reports.

Conservatives have said other "black marks" on her record include her sponsorship of a bill to abolish public drunkenness as a crime and her support of a bill lowering the drinking age from 21 to 19.

The only bright spots on her legislative record, conservative forces contend, are her support for measures urging Congress to allow prayers in schools and opposing forced school busing and handgun controls.

For years, O'Connor pushed for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in Arizona. But more damaging in the eyes of conservatives is her alleged support for allowing women to take part in military combat.

In her answers to a lengthy Senate Judiciary Committee questionnaire, O'Connor made no secret of her feminist record, noting: "As a legislator I worked to equalize the treatment of women under state law by seeking repeal of a number of outmoded Arizona statutes."

O'Connor also may face questioning on some alleged conflicts of interest during her four years in the state Senate. One charge is that while she was Arizona Senate majority leader, she brought a state Medicaid bill favored by her brother-in-law to a floor vote after it was twice killed in the appropriations committee.

Another charge is that while

serving as a board member of the First National Bank of Arizona, she excused herself from voting on only four of 16 major banking bills. She also was accused of attempting to weaken air pollution laws a time when her husband's law firm represented Kennecott Copper Co., whose smelters were to be serious polluters.

If O'Connor can withstand public dissection of her record — and there is little in the conservative claims that appears likely to sway many votes against her — she will pass Senate muster. Senate leaders predict confirmation by mid-September and the swearing in of the first woman justice by Sept. 25.

Manson family member appeals murder conviction

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Former Manson family member Leslie Van Houten is appealing her conviction in the 1969 LaBianca killings to the Supreme Court on grounds her jury was shown gruesome pictures of murders for which she was not charged.

After three trials, Van Houten was found guilty of murder and conspiracy in the deaths of Leno LaBianca, a wealthy grocery chain executive in Southern California, and his wife, Rosemary. They were killed as part of Charles Manson's "Helter Skelter" revolution.

Van Houten has asked the high court to overturn her conviction because prosecutors showed her jury several gruesome color photographs of the Manson family's slaying of actress Sharon Tate and four others, a crime that occurred the night before the LaBianca slayings and for which

she was not charged.

But prosecutors, in arguments filed with the high court by the California attorney general's office, defended their use of the photos at Van Houten's trial and urged the justices to reject her appeal.

Introduced at her third trial were photos of the bloody bodies of Tate — wife of film director Roman Polanski — and four others killed on Aug. 9, 1969. The other victims were Voitek Frykowski, Abigail Folger, Jay Sebring and Steven Parent.

Five color photos shown to the jury are included in a packet that is part of Van Houten's petition to the high court.

Prosecutors said the Manson family members who participated in the Tate slaying were Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, Linda Kasabian and Tex Watson. The following night, they said, Watson, Krenwinkel and Van Houten

killed the LaBiancas.

The state told the justices that because Van Houten was aware "her companions" had been involved in the Tate murders, "with that knowledge she wanted to join them and participate in the killing that would take place on the night the LaBiancas were so cruelly slain."

The photos shown the jury, the state argued, also were important "because they related to the manner of killing, which is part of the conspiracy."

A California appeals court turned down Van Houten's appeal, leading to the case before the Supreme Court. She is serving a life sentence in the California Institution for Women at Folsom, Calif.

The justices will decide whether to hear her appeal when they return from summer recess in October.

Lawyer to fight for child's right to receive Laetrile

United Press International
TIJUANA, Mexico — Famed defense attorney Melvin Belli says he will help the parents of 2-year-old leukemia victim Amanda Accardi fight for the right to choose their child's medical care.

Belli, 74, met with the Accardis

Friday at the Mexican Laetrile clinic where Amanda has been treated for cancer, and told reporters he would fight Los Angeles County officials in a battle that might go to the highest court in the land.

"If we lose in Los Angeles County, we'll attempt to test this

matter all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court," Belli said.

Belli said he charges \$400 an hour for legal consultation and has written many books, but money and publicity did not motivate him to represent the Accardis.

"It certainly isn't money because they haven't got any," Belli said of Michael Accardi, 26, a former Glendale, Calif., purchasing agent, and his wife, Catherine. The couple and their two daughters have been living on donations and free medical care for Amanda at the Tijuana, Mexico, cancer clinic.

Accardi took Amanda out of Los Angeles Children's Hospital July 16 while she was under court order to receive experimental chemotherapy treatment for leukemia.

He took his family to Tijuana and placed Amanda in the care of Dr. Ernesto Contreras at the Centro Medico del Mar cancer clinic complex. There she received Laetrile, chemotherapy and enzymes, and almost immediately appeared to improve.

Contreras attributed the improvement to conventional chemotherapy rather than to Laetrile and enzymes.

Several weeks later, Dr. Paul Kung, a San Diego cancer specialist, confirmed that Amanda's cancer was in remission.

Belli said, "A parent has the right to make the decision on his child's medical treatment, whether it be here, in Belgium, or back in Harvard."

"What is important is what makes the determination. That's what matters. I don't think our Juvenile Court law can reach out across the border and bring back the parents or the child. I think parents have a God-given and constitutional right to make decisions over their child and choose what doctors are going to do."

The Accardis have been ordered to demonstrate in a Los Angeles Juvenile Court hearing Sept. 16 that Amanda is getting proper medical attention in Tijuana.

If the court finds that she is not, the county's Department of Public Social Services may take custody of Amanda.

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