

Pro-Life supporters join endangered species list

You wouldn't know it from the size of the rally they had in Washington D.C., but the members of the Right to Life Movement are the last of a dying breed. They assembled in Washington this past Saturday in a vain attempt to encourage our nation's leaders to either support the Pro-Lifers or lose their backing at the ballot box.

With the exception of Vice-President Quayle and a few soap opera actors, nobody with a large following cared to attend. Even President Bush had other things to do; in lieu of stopping in he called and made a speech over the phone.

Why wasn't there broad support from all areas of the public spotlight as there was when the Pro-Choice movement had its rally last year at this same time? The answer lies in the attitude Americans have concerning abortion.

The majority of Americans believe that women, not a legislature composed largely of white males, should have the right to make a decision on the personal issue of abortion. It only makes sense, then, that not too many members of Congress cared to show up and support

Patrick Nolan
Columnist

the Right to Life movement. Why should they when they are elected to represent the views of their districts in Congress?

Simple logic will tell you that if a majority of Americans support the right of a woman to make her own choice, then the majority of the members of Congress representing those districts will agree with their voting constituents.

Consequently, taking the Pro-Life stance is political suicide. The Supreme Court might have been trying to help the unborn when they ruled on the Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services case last summer, but the only ones to gain from that decision have been the Democrats. While the Republicans were still gloating over their latest presidential victory, the Democrats were diligently searching for an issue that they and the American

public had in common. The answer they came up with was merely another question, the one of abortion.

The issue of abortion played a key role in the recent gubernatorial elections held in New Jersey and Virginia. Both Republicans running in these states were Pro-Life, and both Democrats were Pro-Choice. The result? The Pro-Choice candidates emerged victorious.

These two races marked the beginning of a new trend — elections nationwide having their outcomes influenced heavily by the candidate's view on abortion. The victories of these Pro-Choice candidates in gubernatorial and soon to be congressional elections will continue as long as Americans feel threatened by the actions of the Supreme Court.

Evidence of this threat can be seen in the fact that the Pro-Choice movement currently has roughly seven times the amount of funds that the Right to Lifers' possess. While this gap is expected to narrow, it clearly shows how the Supreme Court's decision galvanized the Pro-Choice crusade.

It was a painful lesson for the Republicans, and now they are facing a dilemma on what to do with this political hot potato. For years the Republican Party has had crusaders such as Ronald Reagan and Pat Robertson advocating the Right to Life agenda. As a result, the Republican Party has been associated with the Pro-Life movement.

Now they are softening their rhetoric; Lee Atwater, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, has stated that the Republican Party is big enough for all views on this sensitive issue. This desperate attempt to keep the voting public from running into the arms of the Democrats is weak at best.

It has been the Democrats who have been supporters of the Pro-Choice movement since its inception, and they, not the Republicans, are the ones that are likely to reap the benefits of this sudden concern for abortion rights.

With the New Jersey gubernatorial landslide fresh on the minds of all potential candidates for any political office, it is going to be difficult for the Right to Life movement to attract new talent. The safe political stance to take

on abortion these days is one of "personally opposed, but up to a woman to decide". Anything more extreme than this is likely to cost a candidate votes on both sides of the issue.

It is for this reason that the days of the Pro-Life movement are numbered. Candidates will realize that the Pro-Choice advocates are in the minority, thus have no choice but to support the constitutional right of women to make their own decision.

It will be interesting to see what an abortion plays in the governor's race here in Texas. With Ann Richards strongly pro-choice, Clayton Williams going to have a hard time convincing women that he is the candidate for them, especially since he has alienated a large share of women already with his timed analogy linking rape with the weather. You never know, though, Williams might switch sides when he realizes that women in the "servicing business" can get pregnant too.

Patrick Nolan is a junior economics major.

Mail Call

Vote Saturday against sales tax

EDITOR:

On Saturday, May 5, students at Texas A&M will have an opportunity to help determine how deep local government will dig into their pockets and pocketbooks.

Few, if any, will take advantage of this opportunity.

History shows very little student interest and involvement in local governmental affairs, perhaps unfortunately for them.

The City of College Station is holding an election next Saturday to fill four seats on the City Council (all with only one candidate) and, of concern to A&M students, the imposition of an additional one-half cent to the local sales tax.

When the question of putting this matter before the voters was first discussed and voted on, I voted no because this is generally considered to be a very regressive tax and because the approaches being considered for offsetting the extra burden — lowering utility bills and reducing the property tax rate — would discriminate against a very large segment of our population: students at A&M, both on-campus and off-campus, who pay no utility bills or property tax. Some do pay the latter in their off-campus rent and quite a few of these pay for city utilities.

It seemed to me then that the unfair treatment of students, particularly those living on campus, was just an unfortunate consequence of imposing this additional tax on the general citizenry.

Recent information from City Hall, however, makes it clear that the zapping of "on-campus students, visitors and others" is the objective. Their rationale: These folks use city streets and parks and the campus gets municipal fire protection.

This reasoning is hard to understand. The visitors pay a large portion of the \$4 million in sales tax revenue now collected.

And students are, after all, the basis of our local economy and the reason there is a College Station.

Time is very short before the election. Those living on campus (Precinct 20) may vote Saturday at A&M Presbyterian church on Church St. as well as those in Northgate and University Towers, other student-voters in other parts of the City at their regular polling places.

A much larger than normal showing of student concern just might be effective in deciding the fate of this question of equity and principle.

Jim Gardner
TAMU Professor and C.S. City Councilman

A couple of good Ags

EDITOR:

Lance Anderson and Jeff Beltz have the Aggie Spirit which attracted many of us to attend Texas A&M University.

My car stalled in the flood waters on the Eastgate entrance to campus during heavy rains on Tuesday, a week and a half ago.

After being pushed to higher ground, the car would not start. Both Lance and Jeff spent thirty minutes in the rain working on my car to get it started.

I would like to thank them for their help. They are what being an Aggie is all about.

Michael S. McGrann '93

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Students' slacking on census not due to publicity problem

I would like to address the article about the census printed in The Batt on Thursday, April 19, 1990. In this article Tom Murray, associate director of student affairs at A&M, stated that "the publicity wasn't as good as it could have been."

At this point I would like to ask Murray where he has been and what he has done to promote the census during the past six months.

The city of College Station created a committee of volunteers that gave their time solely to promote the census in this community. One of the committee's major concerns was the student count. I would now like to share with you what this committee did to promote the census to the students:

- The committee felt that awareness was the key to success in having students fill out and return their forms. On that assumption, student leaders, such as Kevin Buchman, student body president, and Leah Hanselka, Resident Hall Association president, made Public Service Announcements asking students to "stand up and be counted."

- In addition, campus administrators, such as Dr. John J. Koldus, vice-president for student services, were contacted for suggestions on how to "get the word out." Koldus even went as far as volunteering to make a Public Service Announcement asking the students to fill out their forms.

- These PSA's made by Koldus and student leaders, as well as others made nationally by The Ad Council, were run by local television and radio stations on a regular basis.

- Every student organization (all 700 of them) was sent a letter, addressed to their president. The significance of the census and the impact it could have on the University was briefly outlined in this letter. Each president was asked to, during their next meeting, outline these facts and encourage students to fill out their forms as soon as they received them.

- Each residence hall is considered a student organization, so each hall president received one of these forms.

- Speakers from the committee went and spoke at student organization meetings, organizations such as Student Senate and Resident Hall Association. In the ten minute presentation, the

Timothy W. King
Reader's Opinion

speaker outlined the importance and impact the census will have on the nation, the state, the city, and the university. Every student present was asked to "spread the word" and make sure College Station and Texas A&M got an accurate count.

- The city of College Station, in conjunction with student government, ran a quarter page ad in The Battalion Monday, April 2- Thursday, April 5. In this ad students were asked to fill out their form and were shown how to fill out the section on income if they got the long form. This was a paid advertisement.

College Station volunteers gave their time solely to promote the census in this community. One of the committee's major concerns was the student count.

- A banner was hung across Texas Avenue for two weeks. This banner was located at the corner of Texas and George Bush Drive, because the committee felt it would get maximum publicity at this location.

- The Battalion was contacted by one of the committee members. This individual asked that The Batt give maximum coverage to the census. The Batt responded and published one major article and one minor article concerning the census, although they failed to publish a special to the editor written by the committee chair and KBTX television news anchor, Jeff Braun, a special published by the Eagle and the College Station Press.

- The media was contacted and two press conferences were held concerning the census. In response to these press conferences, KBTX did a story on the census that ran on the 10 p.m. news.

- A list of every location, and a contact for that location, on campus that

might have someone living there was created by the committee and given to the Census Bureau to ease their search of people on campus.

These are just some of the things the committee did to encourage the student count. They also did several other projects that were targeted at other areas of the community.

Now I would like to let you know what Murray and his staff did (or did not do) to promote the census.

Murray's office received the forms individually addressed to each student living in a residence hall, early on Friday afternoon (about two p.m.), March 30. Murray was supposed to distribute the forms to the residents through his (i.e. resident directors and resident advisors).

No resident got their forms before Tuesday night, April 3, and most residents did not receive their forms until Wednesday or Thursday night (April 4 or 5). The return date on the forms was Friday, April 6. Several presidents, aware that something was wrong, called a member of the committee concerned because it was Tuesday night and they had not yet received their forms.

It is absurd for Murray and his staff to take so much time to get the forms out, and then blame the lack of promotions for the low return. I believe that Murray owes the College Station Census Promotions Committee, the of College Station, Student Government and the students of Texas A&M an apology for the remarks he made concerning this issue.

I would like to end this commentary by encouraging you to fill out your form, and turn it in if haven't done so yet. Your parents cannot claim you, you have to do it yourself. It is not too late, yet, but it will be soon. Time is running out.

So dig through that pile of stuff on your desk, find that blue and white form, and fill it out. If you threw your form away, you can get one from the Census Bureau in Bryan. Let's go, twelfth man, stand up and be counted. The future of Texas and Texas A&M your future — depends on you!

Timothy W. King is a senior bioengineering major.

The Battalion

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Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson

