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MATHEMATICS CONTEST
 Annual
Freshmen & Sophomore Mathematics Contest
 Tuesday, April 11, 2000
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
 Room 317 Milner Hall

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It is intended to award at least six prizes:

1. \$150 for paper judged to be best overall
2. \$125 for second place
3. \$100 for third place
4. \$ 80 for fourth place
5. \$ 60 for fifth place
6. \$ 50 for sixth place

Contest problems will cover topics through Math 152 (Engineering Calculus II) for Freshmen contestants, and through Math 308 (Differential Equations) for Sophomore contestants.

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Contact Doug Hensley, e-mail: dhensley@math.tamu.edu
 For more information and sample problems, check Dr. Hensley's Home Page:
<http://www.math.tamu.edu/~doug.hensley>

(For purposes of this contest, freshmen are first-year undergraduate students, and sophomores are second-year undergraduate students.)

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House approves legislation to ban 'partial abortions'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Courting a third presidential veto on the subject, the Republican-controlled House today approved politically-charged legislation banning "partial birth" abortions.

The vote was 287-141. While the margin was big enough to overturn a threatened veto by President Clinton, the Senate vote on a companion bill last fall was not.

The vote came after several hours of well-worn debate. Supporters claimed the measure would ban a barbaric and unnecessary procedure while opponents contended it was a vaguely worded stalking horse for an un-constitutional effort to ban all abortions.

"Everybody in this room knows this is wrong. It is not legally or morally defensible," said Rep. Rick Hill, R-Mont., graphically describing a procedure in which he said a fetus is partially delivered, then its "brains are extracted with the suction device."

"Consider our common humanity," appealed Rep. Charles Canady, R-Fla., the lead supporter of the measure.

Countered Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y.: "Proponents of this bill are not just chipping away at the right to choose, they are taking a jackhammer to it."

Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., accused the GOP of trying to exploit a "wedge issue in this election year," a reference to the extent to which the measure causes many Democrats to part company with organizations that support abortion rights.

Passage of the bill was never in doubt, but opponents held out hope that support would be less than the two-thirds majority needed to override a threatened veto. The House

has overridden two previous vetoes on the issue, but the Senate has sustained Clinton's rejection each time, and is expected to do so again.

The Senate approved a similar bill last fall, and a compromise is expected before fall. The only difference between the two bills is a Senate-passed provision — engineered by Democrats — declaring that the high court's Roe vs. Wade ruling in 1973 established "an important constitutional right" and should not be overturned.

Sponsors say the measure is designed to abolish a certain type of late-term procedure in which a fetus is partially delivered, then aborted.

Opponents counter that, as written, the bill would apply far more broadly, thus undermining the Supreme Court ruling in Roe vs. Wade in that granted women the right to abortions.

Congress is voting on the measure at the same time the Supreme Court is prepared to hear arguments on the constitutionality of a partial birth ban enacted in Nebraska.

While there is no direct connection between the court case and the pending legislation, sponsors say the measure before the House was crafted to meet objections of federal appeals court judges who said the Nebraska statute failed to meet constitutional standards.

As drafted, the House bill seeks to ban abortions in which a doctor "vaguely delivers some portion of an intact living fetus until the fetus is partially outside the body of the mother" and "kills the fetus while the intact living fetus is partially outside the body of the mother."

"Everybody in this room knows this is wrong. It is not legally or morally defensible."

— Rep. Rick Hill R-Mont.

Probe of alleged retaliation against Smith & Wesson grows

HARTFORD, Conn (AP) — Prosecutors in at least six states are investigating whether the gun industry is illegally trying to punish Smith & Wesson for agreeing to make its weapons more childproof.

More than 20 subpoenas have been issued for firearms manufacturers, distributors and others, Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said Wednesday. The federal government is also looking at the issue, he said. A call to the Justice Department was not immediately returned.

"Exercising corporate responsibility should not be reason for your competitors to put a bull's eye on your back," said Nathan Barankin, a spokesperson for California Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

Smith & Wesson agreed in March to include safety locks with all handguns — external locks at first, and internal ones within two years. Also, new guns will not accept magazines holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition. In addition, the company agreed to invest in "smart gun" technology that allows only the owner to pull the trigger, and to eliminate advertising that might attract children or criminals.

In exchange, a number of municipalities, states and the federal government agreed not to sue Smith & Wesson over gun violence.

Gun groups and Smith & Wesson competitors protested the agreement. And the Gun Owners of America urged

ports of communication among companies, Website postings, conversations or threats involving a ban on magazine ads for Smith & Wesson, and attempts to discourage lawyers from representing the manufacturer.

Under antitrust law, it would be illegal for companies to collude to deprive Smith & Wesson of business opportunities.

Blumenthal and the attorneys general of New York and Maryland began the investigation last week. Blumenthal said that California, Florida and Massachusetts are joining the probe.

"The indications are sufficiently strong that we believe a full-scale effort is justified," Blumenthal said.

Gun Owners of America spokesman John Velleco said the group is within its First Amendment rights to call for a boycott. He said the industry is too fragmented to collude against the company.

"Gunmakers couldn't organize a one-car funeral," Velleco said.

Ed Schultz, president of Springfield, Mass.-based Smith & Wesson, said his company did not ask for the investigation, but "we certainly disagree with the kinds of things the attorneys general think may be going on."

"Exercising corporate responsibility should not be reason for your competitors to put a bull's eye on your back."

— Bill Lockyer Spokesperson for California Attorney General

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10 parks deemed at risk

WASHINGTON (AP) — Threats facing national parks from urban sprawl and vandalism snowmobiles, a private park advocacy group said Wednesday, as it announced the 10 federal parks it considers most endangered.

The National Park and Conservation Association removed five units from last year's imperiled list and added five new ones, the group said attacks on the parks have not eased.

"Some of our national parks are coming a disgrace," complained Kierman, president of the group, whose primary purpose is as a private watchdog for the federal park system.

"Some of our national parks are becoming a disgrace"

— Tom Kierman President of The National Park and Conservation Association

the park system's biggest challenge is to overcome a shortage of money to address a massive backlog of repairs.

Making the list for a second year are some of the most popular and well-known national parks: Yellowstone, Grand Smoky Mountains, and the Everglades.

The parks that were replaced last year included Gettysburg National Monument in Pennsylvania with improvements were made in a proposed visitors center, the Grand Canyon because steps are being taken to ease congestion; and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota because of a moratorium on Jet Skis.

Still, the group said a number of threats jeopardize the parks, which includes more than 360 snowmobile units from the widely known park, Yellowstone to historic battlefields, national monuments, seashores, and historic sites.

Yellowstone in northwest Wyoming was the nation's first national park, created in 1872, but "it ranks as one of the most endangered," said the association. Overcrowding with motor vehicles and winter recreation, including about 1,000 snowmobiles, is "pumping tons of pollutants into the air," the group said.

Yellowstone was featured in last year's list when concern was raised about its "crumbling sewage system. Previously a huge proposed gold mine near the park caused concern, but plans for that mine have been abandoned."

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