

Capitol Letters

Your letters requesting immediate action on Bill #A9313 The Parental Consent Bill are needed at this time.

When the Supreme Court allowed the right to privacy of the mother to supersede the right to life of her unborn child, it declined to make a decision on the necessity of parental consent in abortions performed on unmarried minors (under 18 years). In New York State abortions are performed on minors without parental consent under the vague emergency provisions of the public health law, Section 2504 (3). Bill #A9313 The Parental Consent Bill would ensure that the emergency provisions of the public health law, Section 2504 (3) might not be construed to permit elective abortions on minors without parental knowledge or consent for these reasons:

1. Elective abortions are not emergency procedures. Since an individual pregnancy presents no health threat to the community, parental consent should be required for abortion just as it is required for other medical and surgical procedures done on minors.

2. A minor must be protected as far as possible from the consequences of a rash decision. Especially in the distressful circumstances often associated with the abortion decision, family advice and counseling may be more important than the purely medical diagnosis. It is well-known that referral agencies, abortion clinics and physicians do not always counsel the girl regarding her unborn child or the physical and psychological consequences of legal abortion. Teenage girls are increasing in numbers as consumers for those who profit from abortions. After the abortion, the girl is left alone to live with the aftermath of her uninformed decision.

3. To preserve the family as a societal unit, the State must uphold the right and responsibility of parents to the custody and control of their minor children. The legal objective of the Planned Parenthood Federation, the Reproductive Freedom Project of the American Civil Liberties Union and Zero Population Growth is to make contraception, sterilization and abortion available to all regardless of age, marital status, or parental

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consent. (Bill #9313 does not apply to the "emancipated minor," one who has married or is the parent of a child. Also, this bill does not endorse legal abortion but rather corrects one of the abuses of legal abortion).

The Parental Consent Bill has passed the N.Y. Senate and is now before the Assembly Health Committee chaired by Assemblyman Herbert J. Miller. Write to Mr. Miller urging that Bill #A9313 The Parental Consent Bill be released to the Assembly for a vote. Also write to your Assemblyman urging (1) that he put pressure on Mr. Miller to release the bill for a vote, and (2) urging your Assemblyman to vote "yes" on the bill.

Herbert J. Miller (and all Assemblymen), Legislative Office Building, Albany, N.Y. 12224.

Compiled by Jeanne D. Sweeney.

HOUSING WORKSHOPS

Three workshops have evolved from the 16th Ward Coalition's Housing Conference Feb. 26. The workshops are designed to coordinate implementation of proposals. The sessions have been scheduled for mornings at the Lewis St. Center, 57 Lewis St. On April 22, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., an early warning workshop will be conducted by Terry MacLennan. Security will be the topic on April 29, from 9:30 to 11 a.m.; Father William Cosgrove and Leo Pendergast will be the moderators. A workshop on re-occupation will be May 6 from 9:30 to 11 a.m., with Sally Knorr and Lawrence Evans moderating. Further information may be obtained from Sally Knorr, 325-1773.

Two additional points are worthy of thought. 1) The St. Joseph sterilization manual lists numerous specific diseases which they believe warrant direct sterilization, including hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, TB, possible genetic disorders (such as Down's Syndrome), possible psychiatric "indications" and possible emotional or ego-regression. This is referred to as the total future health of the woman. With all due respect I point out that this is exactly the same logic on which the Supreme Court based its abortion-on-demand decision in 1973. Abortions are legal in the United States at any time during the pregnancy if any facet of the total future health of the woman — emotional, mental, physical, familial (economic), psychological or life style preference MAY be affected by continuation of the pregnancy.

2) Regardless of the well-prepared justifications given in the St. Joseph's sterilization manual, regardless of the obviously humane intentions of those who prepared it, the actual consent forms which must be signed by the woman are blunt. In one, "I have consented to the performance of a major operation on me for the purpose of preventing me from becoming pregnant in the future." In another, "While the intent of the operation is to make me sterile, no guarantee has been made as to the results that may be obtained." In a third, "I believe that tubal ligation is the preferable operation to achieve sterilization in my case."

These justifications for sterilization are the results of the nuns' and doctors' and theologians' opinions. They are not the interpretations of the Vatican.

And the following quotations, though pertinent, are not present in the St. Joseph sterilization manual: "Evil is not to be done so that good may come of it." (Rom. 3:8 as quoted by Pope Pius XI On Christian Marriage). "It is never licit even for the gravest reasons to do evil that good may follow therefrom." (Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae.)

NEXT WEEK: Natural Family Planning.

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The Catholic position of sterilization is explicit. Any procedure which has as its immediate, intentional goal the temporary or permanent destruction of the reproductive capabilities (man or woman) is intrinsically evil and is forbidden. "Direct sterilization — to render child bearing impossible — is a grave violation of the moral law." (Pope Pius XII). The Church allows for the removal of a diseased reproductive organ as in the case of tumors, because the intention then is the removal or cure of an existing pathological condition immediately threatening to the life of the patient. The loss of the regenerative powers in this case is neither sought nor desired.

The organ itself need not be diseased. A healthy organ, if it will stimulate growth e.g. of cancerous tissue, may be removed. Direct sterilization with the intent of contraception, viewed as a form of violent mutilation is forbidden. Indirect sterilization as a consequence of radical life-saving procedures is allowed.

However, according to high reliable sources, at least five (and possibly seven times that number) Catholic hospitals in the United States and Canada are now permitting direct sterilizations, many of the hospitals following the lead of St. Joseph's Catholic hospital in London, Ont. The justification offered in the St. Joseph sterilization manual is based on the total future health of the woman. With a bibliography including the names of Charles Curran, Dietrich Boenhoffer, Bernard Haring and Joseph Fletcher (author of Situation Ethics — The New Morality) the manual concludes, "The only reason for allowing sterilization in this hospital is the presence of a pathological condition in the woman." It is interesting to note that the Conclusions segment of the manual does not read "a pathological condition immediately threatening to the life of the patient." And it is also revealing to note that there are no reasons offered for the refusal of sterilization requests.

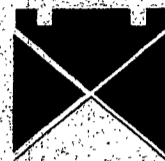
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