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Republicans: Abortion, No; ERA, Yes

Kansas City, Mo. [RNS] — Support for non-sectarian prayers in public schools, tax credits for parents of children in non-public schools, a "pro-life" amendment to the Constitution and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) were among the planks of the Republican Party's platform as adopted at its convention here.

Other items in the platform of special concern to religious groups included opposition to research on live fetuses, to federal registration of firearms, and to forced busing to achieve racial balance in schools.

The platform urged the Soviet Union to implement the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and the Helsinki Accord, and called for an immediate end to "all forms of harassment" of persons wishing to emigrate.

A plank, entitled "morality in

Foreign Policy" was added by a voice vote to the foreign policy section. Among other things, it commended exiled Russian novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn as a "great beacon of human courage and morality," and cited "guidance by the hand of God" as an element of a foreign policy that would lead to a lasting world peace.

With regard to international terrorism, the Republican platform declared that "detracting every form of hijacking calls for sanctions against countries that aid terrorists." It applauded the Israeli raid on the Ugandan airport at Entebbe to rescue hostages of terrorists.

In the area of educational policy, the platform made the point that "bureaucratic control of schools by Washington has the potential for destruction of our educational system by taking more and more

decisions away from parents and local school authorities."

The plank opposing forced busing declared that "the racial composition of many schools resulted from decisions by people about where they choose to live. If Congress continues to fail to act, we would favor consideration of an amendment to the Constitution forbidding the assignment of children to schools on the basis of race."

Under health, the platform opposed compulsory national health insurance. It added, "While we support valid medical and biological research efforts which can produce life-saving results, we oppose any research on live fetuses. We are also opposed to any legislation which sanctions ending the life of any patient."

With regard to discrimination, the Republican platform criticized what it called "the much discredited quota system," and favored instead "alternative means of assisting the victims of past discrimination to realize their full worth as American citizens." It called for "vigorous enforcement of laws to assure equal treatment in job recruitment, hiring, promotion, pay, credit, mortgage access, and housing."

Abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment had been two of the most controversial aspects of the proposed platform, but the convention adopted both planks as proposed. It reaffirmed the Republican Party's support for the ERA and supported the adoption of a constitutional amendment "to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children."

In the area of national defense, the platform supported production and deployment of the B-1 Bomber, which has been opposed by several religious groups.

On the Panama Canal, the platform declared that negotiations between the U.S. and Panama

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Sr. Kathleen Kircher Named Chief Ecumenist

Sister Kathleen Kircher, SSJ, has been appointed director of the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the diocese of Rochester.

Sister Kathleen will work two days a week at her ecumenical post from Sept. 1 to June 30, 1977. Her duties include acting as resource person, heading the nine-member Diocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and coordinating the diocese's work with Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) and denominational leaders. The development of ecumenical guidelines for interfaith marriages and inter-communion is among the responsibilities noted in the job description.

In addition to her ecumenical duties, Sister Kathleen will join Father Robert Collins of the Office of Family Life to work as coordinator of ministry to divorced and separated Catholics. She will

contribute three days a week to expand this ministry and to investigate whether there is a need for a fulltime staff person from the diocese.

Father James Lawlor, assistant pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Greece, will assist Sister Kathleen in the investigation and proposal writing. He has organized a ministry for divorced and separated Catholics in the diocese.

This position will also run from Sept. 1 to June 30, 1977. Sister Kathleen worked as a guidance counselor at Nazareth Academy from 1974-1976 and at DeSales High School from 1970-1974. She worked as a junior high school teacher at St. Augustine and St. Stanislaus School from 1964-1970.

Sister Kathleen was graduated from Nazareth College with a BA in English in 1968, and from Boston College with an MS degree in Counselor Education.



Visitors from France

Photo by Ben Sussio

Rochester was described as "a real city" by French visitors Elizabeth Desroussel, Denis Antoine, Beatrice Fontaine and Christine Hauger, members of the Little Singers of the Cross of Lorraine. Hosted by St. Charles Borromeo Church, Greece, and Bethany Presbyterian Church, the French singers spent three days in Rochester last week singing at the Genesee Crossroads Park, the George Eastman House and St. Charles.

Poll to Test Sentiment For Abortion Amendment

Would you be in favor of a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion — except to save the life of the mother?

volunteer by calling district pro-life representatives, listed below.

27th Congressional District (Tompkins, Tioga and Chemung counties) Donna Rahner, 310 Wilson Ave., Endwell, N.Y. 13760; telephone 607-754-0195.

33rd Congressional District (Schuyler, Ontario, Tompkins, Cayuga, and Seneca counties) George Hyrcza, 6414 Hedgerow Lane, Jamesville, N.Y. 13078; Telephone 315-492-1433.

34th Congressional District (Monroe, and Wayne counties) Marie Polito, 1124 Brooktree Lane, Webster, N.Y. 14580; telephone 716-872-5337.

35th Congressional District (Chemung and Steuben counties) Muriel Burns, 19 Richmond Ave., Batavia, N.Y. 14020; telephone 716-343-8053.

39th Congressional District (Chemung, Chautauqua and Allegany counties) Father Ralph Federico, Tri-County Right-to-Life, 270 Newton Ave., Jamestown, N.Y. 14701; telephone 716-644-4556.

The pro-life voter survey was initiated by the National Right-to-Life Committee and has been a success in Ohio, Michigan and Illinois, where poll results have been brought to congressmen and area politicians.

The five congressional districts of the Rochester diocese will be polled by telephone by area Right-to-Life members who are looking to volunteer organizations and individuals for assistance.

It is estimated that more than a million registered voters will be reached in the 12-county diocese. The State Right-to-Life Committee intends to poll voters across the state.

Individuals and groups can



Life in Retirement

Archbishop Karl J. Alter is nuzzled by "Geist," his driver's pet Great Dane, as he talks about his life in retirement. Now 91 and still maintaining an office at the Archbishop's House in Cincinnati, the former head of the Cincinnati archdiocese maintains as busy a schedule as his failing sight permits. The prelate, who has had the unusual experience of surviving both his successor as Bishop of Toledo and then the man who succeeded him in 1969 as Archbishop of Cincinnati, starts his day by saying Mass for the nuns who work at the Archbishop's House and uses much of the rest of each day to indulge his love of study and to keep "au courant" on contemporary church and public affairs. And he looks forward to visits from "Priests I ordained," many of them now bishops. (RNS)

The Church in Latin America

This week the Courier-Journal features a report on the diocesan mission of San Jose Obrero in La Paz, Bolivia. Father Daniel Tormey recently visited the mission and shares his thoughts on Page 11. Also on that page are reports from several Latin American countries, each outlining the struggles of the Church in championing the poor.