

Pro-Life in Congress: One Win, One Loss

Washington (NC) — It will be more difficult for Congress to approve new restrictions on abortion funding under a set of rules adopted by the House of Representatives on the first day of the 98th Congress Jan. 3.

have made it more difficult to bring constitutional amendments on issues such as abortion to the House floor for a vote.

The new rule making abortion funding restrictions more difficult to enact was approved, 250-156. But the rule placing new obstacles on House consideration of constitutional amendments was withdrawn before it came to a vote.

national Right to Life Committee, said the decision to withdraw the new rule on constitutional amendments was "due in large part to pro-life pressure."

The best-known appropriation rider has been the Hyde Amendment, which for the past several years has restricted government funding of abortions primarily in the Medicaid program.

The director of the committee, Father Edward Bryce, called the decision to drop the proposed rule change "a victory for those who seek to protect unborn children."

The other change would have increased from a simple majority to a two-thirds majority the number of signatures needed on a House discharge petition for a constitutional amendment. A discharge petition moves a piece of legislation out of a committee which has been blocking a proposal and brings it directly to the House floor for voting.

He also attributed the dropping to pro-life pressure. He credited Rep. Harold Volkner of Missouri and James Oberstar of Minnesota with leading opposition to the change among Democrats.

Abortion funding restrictions, which usually are tacked on as "riders" to annual appropriations bills, will be more difficult to enact because under the new rules the House will be able to end all floor debate and vote on final passage before any appropriations riders are in order. That means that most abortion funding restrictions would have to be tacked onto appropriations bills in committee rather than on the

Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the

The French archbishop was suspended by Pope Paul VI in 1976 after he ordained priests in defiance of a direct papal prohibition. Under the suspension, he cannot licitly celebrate Mass, ordain priests or administer the other sacraments.

He has, however, continued to ordain and carry out other priestly and episcopal functions despite the suspension.

Under Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II there has been a series of discussions aimed at reconciliation with the suspended 77-year-old archbishop, but no agreement has yet been reached.

The order founded by Archbishop Lefebvre, the Priestly Society of St. Pius X, said that the French prelate had met for three hours with Cardinal Ratzinger in July 1982.

At the journalists' meeting Cardinal Ratzinger said that talks would soon be resumed with Archbishop Lefebvre, who was in Rome at that time.

Pro-life groups had been protesting the two proposals, saying they were an effort by House leaders to stifle new pro-life initiatives in Congress.

Theologians Due Process Set

By Father Kenneth J. Doyle

Vatican City (NC) — New due process measures will soon be in effect for the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said its prefect, German Cardinal Josef Ratzinger.

German theologian, Father Hans Kung, who in the 1970s repeatedly refused to go to Rome to submit to a doctrinal examination by the congregation since the current procedures were established in 1971, said he had agreed to submit to questioning despite "the absence of human rights" in the procedure.

Father Schillebeeckx, who was eventually cleared of questions of unorthodoxy regarding the points at issue, was able to confer at times with an advisor in an adjoining room, but at the hearing itself he had to face his questioners alone.

Cardinal Ratzinger also revealed that Pope John Paul II has asked him to continue a dialogue with French traditionalist Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

Archbishop Lefebvre, who leads a worldwide movement from his headquarters in Ecône, Switzerland, opposes reforms set in motion by the Second Vatican Council, particularly those relating to religious freedom, ecumenism and liturgy.

Speaking Dec. 7 at a meeting of the association of journalists who are accredited at the Vatican, Cardinal Ratzinger said that the congregation had decided, at a plenary meeting held the previous week, to accept proposals presented by West German and Swiss bishops regarding the questioning of theologians suspected of holding views not in conformity with the church's teachings.

The principal change, confirmed by the Vatican official, is that theologians whose teachings are being examined will be allowed to be defended by church lawyers at hearings held by the congregation.

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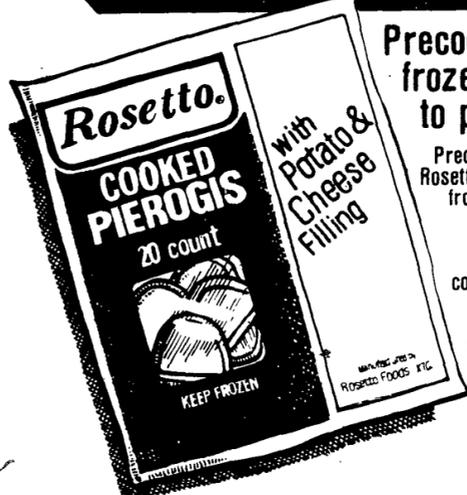


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