

Hatch Amendment Headed for Full Senate Debate

By Jim Lackey
WASHINGTON (NC) -- The Hatch-Eagleton amendment on abortion is headed for a debate by the full Senate, but it is going there with less than enthusiastic support from the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In a dramatic 9-9 tie vote April 19 the committee failed to approve the amendment, which attempts to remove a right to abortion from the Constitution. Instead the committee decided to forward the amendment to the full Senate "without recommendation."

The committee's action means that Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who first introduced the Hatch amendment in 1981, will get his long-awaited floor debate on the proposal. But the vote also indicated some slippage in support for the measure, which was approved by the same committee last year on a 10-7 vote.

Despite the tie vote Hatch was pleased that his amendment was headed to the Senate floor, where Hatch has been promised a debate on the proposal by Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) sometime this spring.

"This will be the first time in history that the Senate will hold a full debate on abortion," Hatch said shortly after the committee action. "At least we have a vehicle so we can debate all aspects of abortion."

As in the subcommittee, which approved the revised Hatch-Eagleton amendment

March 24 after only 10 minutes of discussion, the full Judiciary Committee also disposed of the amendment after only a brief discussion, prompting one opponent of the measure, Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), to say the constitutional amending process should not be taken so lightly.

Baucus, while praising Hatch for meeting the abortion issue "head on" through a constitutional amendment rather than through simple legislation, said the effect of the 10-word amendment is "entirely unclear" because it does not spell out the rights and obligations of state and federal governments in dealing with abortion.

As approved by both the Constitution subcommittee and the full Judiciary Committee the amendment reads, "A right to abortion is not secured by this Constitution."

Hatch's original proposal also had included a second section giving the federal and state governments concurrent power to regulate abortion. But that section was dropped at the March 24 subcommittee meeting after Sen. Thomas Eagleton (D-Mo.) suggested that the Hatch amendment's first 10 words could get the greatest number of Senate votes while still reversing the Supreme Court on abortion.

As the Judiciary Committee's roll-call vote took place, it initially appeared that the amendment had been approved on a 9-8 vote. But Sen. Alan K. Simpson (R-

Wyo.), who had passed on the initial roll call, switched his vote to "no," creating the 9-9 tie.

In last year's 10-7 vote Simpson had voted for the Hatch amendment.

Another committee member who supported the amendment last year but voted against it this time was Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.). Biden told the committee he voted for the Hatch amendment last year so it could be brought to the floor for a vote, but said he was voting against it this year because he opposed a "states' rights" approach on abortion.

Though the Hatch amendment was approved last year by the committee it was withdrawn by Hatch last September in exchange for a promise from Baker that floor time for the proposal would be scheduled before this summer.

Besides Hatch, other committee members who voted for the amendment were Sens. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), Robert Dole (R-Kan.), John East (R-N.C.), Charles Gressley (R-Iowa), Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.), Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) and Howell Heflin (D-Ala.).

Voting against the amendment, besides Simpson, Biden and Baucus, were Sens. Charles Mathias (R-Md.), Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.).

Fingerprinting Of Children

The Monroe County Sheriff's Department's Child Identification Project is in full swing and hundreds of children should be fingerprinted over the next few weeks, Sheriff Andrew P. Meloni said.

Fingerprint sessions have been scheduled at a number of McDonald's Family Restaurants and shopping malls. Deputies also are setting up fingerprinting periods for children in schools serviced by the Sheriff's Department, said Sgt. Joseph Genier, project coordinator.

Deputies will fingerprint children accompanied by their parents at the malls and restaurants. They will be at Perinton Square Mall from noon to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 30, and at Long Ridge Mall from noon to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 7.

The McDonald's schedule: 3303 Chili Ave., Chili, and 35 Spencerport Road, Gates, 4 to 8 p.m., May 2-3; 775 Panorama Trail, Penfield, and 3280 Monroe Ave., Pittsford, 4 to 8 p.m., May 9-10; 6500 Brockport-Spencerport Road, Brockport, 4 to 8 p.m., May 16-17.

School dates will be announced as they are scheduled.

Garage Sale

Court Our Lady of the Cenacle of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas will hold a garage sale, Friday and Saturday, April 29 and 30 at Fran Lenhard's home, 51 Traymore Road, off Winton Road. Items included in the sale are household goods, antiques, appliances, dishes and glasses.

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