

Time to act on pro-life convictions

Those of us who claim to be pro-life both before and after a child's birth now have an opportunity to demonstrate our convictions.

Congress is currently considering legislation that would provide poor, working families with tax credits for child care, and mandate that workers be allowed a period of unpaid leave to care for a child or an elderly parent, or to handle a family emergency.

At the same time, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children — known as WIC — faces a growing waiting list of clients with a budget that's losing the race against rising food prices.

Anyone concerned with defending the lives of children must oppose cuts in service provided by WIC, which supplies poor women and children with vouchers for such foodstuffs as milk, cheese, juice and infant formula.

Cuts to WIC would only serve to worsen a situation that already is scandalous for a major industrial democracy. Currently, one in four U.S. children under age six lives in poverty; the rate rises to one of every two black children. And a recent study of low birthweight babies among middle-class black women demonstrates that the effects of poverty today can blight future generations.

Nor can we pro-lifers ignore bills in both House and Senate that would expand government support for child care among poor families. Officials of the U.S. Catholic Conference, who have made both family leave and child-care a high priority for upwards of five years, hope a compromise version of the child-care legislation will pass before Congress' August recess.

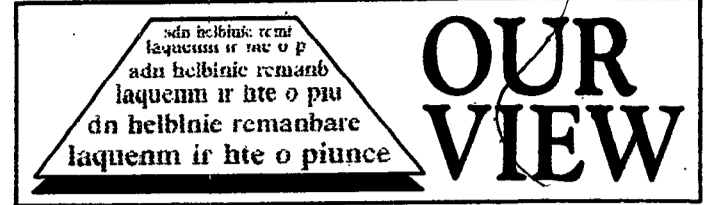
The USCC prefers the House's version of the child-care bill because it offers an earned-income tax credit not only to parents who use day-care centers, but also to at-home mothers or fathers and those working parents who depend on other family members or work alternate shifts to avoid child-care costs. The bill also provides funds for development of quality day-care centers and allows participation by day-care centers sponsored by religious organizations.

Once the issue of the day-care bill is resolved, Con-

gress is expected to turn its attention to family leave. In May, the House passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn, a newly adopted or sick child, or an elderly relative. The Senate is expected to introduce its own version of the legislation before long.

Opponents of family leave charge that the legislation will benefit only a small minority — working women of childbearing age — and will unduly burden businesses with costs that will be passed along in the form of wage cuts or reductions in other benefits.

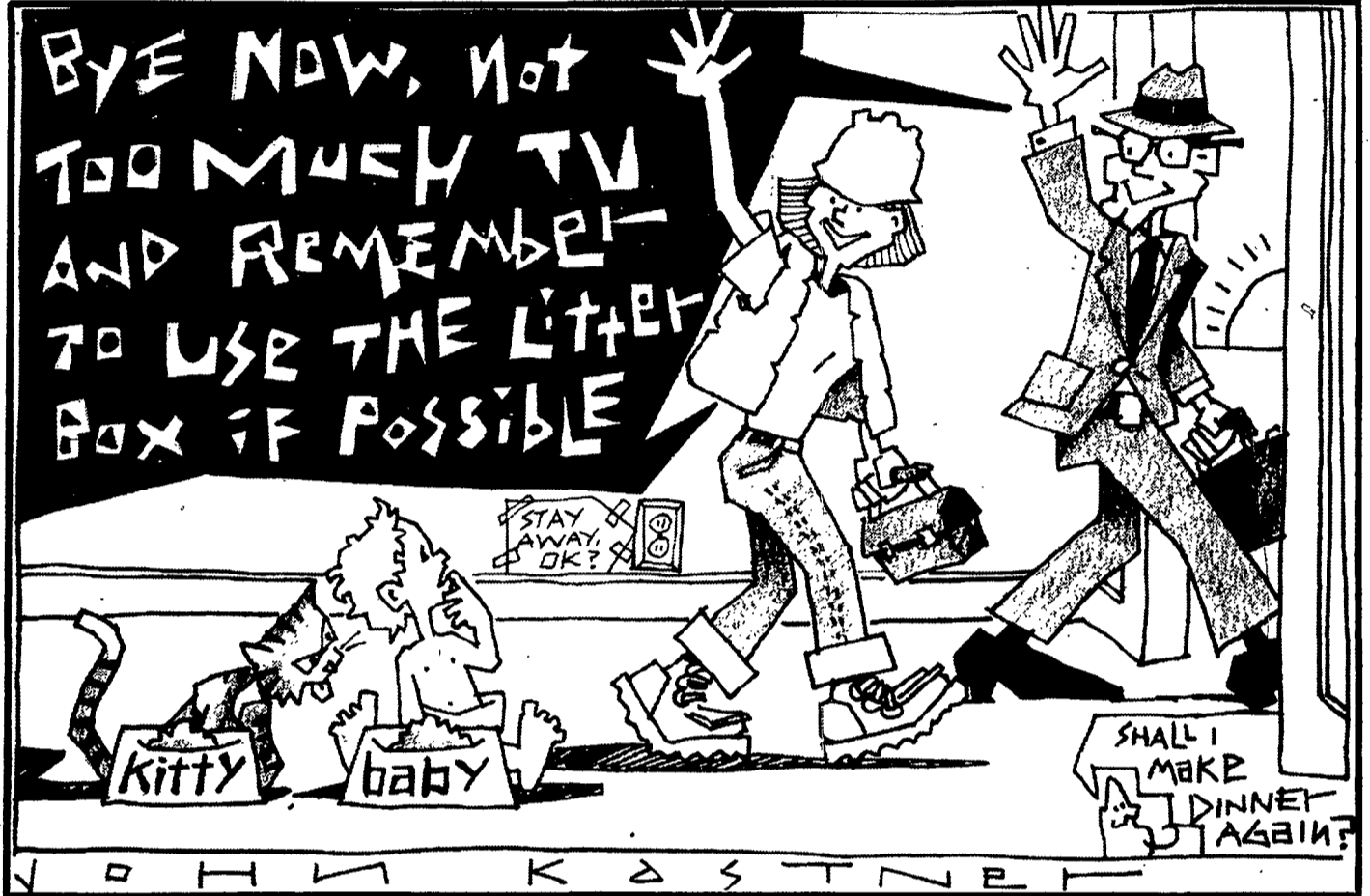
But if mandated leave is bad for business, why do 127 other countries — including such economic powerhouses as West Germany and Japan — provide paid family-care leave of up to 19 weeks?



Even a bedrock, business-loving conservative like Illinois Republican Congressman Henry Hyde saw family leave and the protection it provides for job security as an incentive for adoption and against abortion.

Right now, families are burdened by a shortage of options in caring and providing for young children and aging parents. Helping to alleviate those stresses is "pro-life" because it makes for stronger families and better, more productive employees. Those are benefits we ought to tell our legislators we support.

— The Editors



Controversy, frustration will mar graduation memories

To the editor:

On May 12, 1990, all families of graduating seniors at Bishop Kearney High School received a letter from the school stating that "since parents are the primary educators of their children, special recognition will be given to our parents at this year's graduation." The parents (were) instructed to not only sit with their son or daughter, but also accompany them to the stage when their name is called.

At this time in modern society when the face of the "traditional family" has drastically changed in appearance it is not always the parents who may have been the "primary educators" to our students. In view of this fact I feel that consideration should be given to each family in regard to their individual situations concerning these very personal relationships.

After speaking to various students and parents alike, I have learned that many do not feel comfortable with this decision for several reasons; some students may not have a good relationship with their parents,

Purge harmful people

To the editor:

The death penalty is society's way of purging itself of vicious and harmful people who are cancerous to our society. I do not want these murderers, rapists and torturers on the street. I do not want to pay to maintain them.

In addition, I think the death penalty should be extended to those with three felony convictions. They will never be of benefit to me, and I don't want to support them. As a surgeon excises cancerous tissue, they should be cut out.

John F. Starkweather
Rush

others happen to share a much closer bonding with another family member, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, grandparents, single or divorced parents, etc. Why should it be forced upon each student to cross the stage holding the hands of those who may or may not have been a support to them over the last 13 years? ...

The students and parents should have been informed of the school's intent to change the format of the ceremony before a decision was made to do so. Especially since each family is required to pay \$150 in graduation fees or the student is not allowed to complete the year, or participate in the graduation ceremony, regardless of their academic achievement.

Graduation represents the formal occasion at which time we must finally let go and offer our youth the opportunity to face this and all other challenges unassisted, but at the same time supported by our love.

For many students this (is) their last opportunity to share a very special time together as young graduating adults. We, as educators and parents, should address this newfound level of growth and maturity with deep respect.

If the students' behavior is BK's underlying concern, the school should be honest and straightforward with us, instead of hiding behind the "theme of family," as their focus in this year's exercise. Isn't the concept of family present at every graduation ceremony, anyway?

As a result of this action, BK has promoted a sense of mistrust among the students, that their behavior might be less than desirable. I expect that our senior class will behave no differently than previous classes, through their expressions of joy or fear, relief and enthusiastic pride. I recall that my graduation Class of '67 expressed the same 23 years ago! ...

It's a shame that this occasion has been marred by the controversy and frustration which has evolved from this situation. If Kearney wanted this graduation to be "even more memorable for the Class of '90," they will have certainly achieved that goal through their disregard toward the desires and concerns of the students, thereby forcing a display of protest among both the seniors and parents alike. ...

I am very proud of the entire Bishop Kearney senior class and want to congratulate them on their achievements. I wish them success in their future endeavors, whatever they may be, and I hope that we, as adults, have provided them with a living example of truth, sincere compassion, trust and love for one another as they expand into the future, armed with only these basic Christian values, along with their own very precious hopes and dreams.

Kathy Geraci
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Praying for St. Regis

To the editor:

Many people are aware of the difficult problems on the St. Regis Mohawk Reserve in northern New York. About half of these people are members of the St. Regis Catholic Church located on the Reserve.

As Christians, we are bound to pray for our brothers and sisters in need. In solidarity, let us join in prayer for healing of their pains, which are also our pains. Let us pray for safety, peace, love and harmony for the St. Regis Mohawk people.

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