

Anti-abortion bills get nixed, OK'd by states

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (CNS) — An effort to give Wyoming the most restrictive abortion law in the nation was quashed Jan. 28 by a House committee.

The state Legislature rejected, by a 5-4 vote, the Human Life Protection Act. The vote came after argument by legislators that the bill was "too much, too soon, too stern, too unforgiving," in the words of Rep. Carroll Miller, a Republican.

Introduced by Democratic Rep. Richard Honaker, the bill would have outlawed abortions except when the mother's health was in jeopardy or in cases of rape or incest, as long as the assault was reported within five days. Doctors who performed abortions in violation of those restrictions would have faced felony charges punishable by 14 years in prison.

Amendments introduced in the last two weeks of January would have eliminated the reporting-period requirement, would have dropped the bill's statement that life begins at conception and would have permitted abortions if the children might have had mental or physical defects or other complications that would make survival unlikely. All those amendments failed.

Honaker said he probably would not raise the issue again before the 1993 general session and would not try to bring the bill out of committee for floor debate.

On Jan. 25, Utah adopted a similar law, which allows abortions through the 20th week of pregnancy only in cases of

reported rape or incest; when the woman's life is in danger; when the baby would likely be born with severe mental and physical defects; or if there would be "grave damage to the pregnant woman's medical health."

The American Civil Liberties Union has said it would challenge the law in court, and women's-rights activists have threatened a campaign to undermine Utah's bid for the 1998 Winter Olympics in response to the legislation's approval.

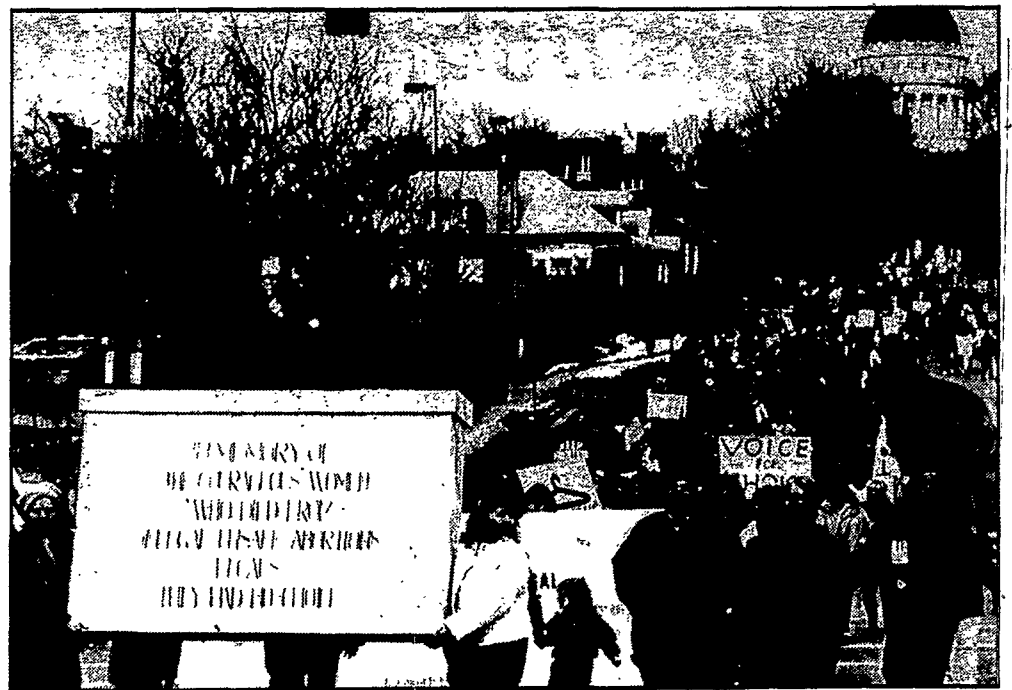
One of the legislation's original drafters has criticized the adopted version as having been "watered-down," and the state's attorney general has said it poses potential legal problems.

Attorney General Paul Van Dam said that because of last-minute changes, the bill suffers from ambiguous language.

"If they really want to overturn *Roe vs. Wade* it may be unduly vague and unconstitutional," he told the *Intermountain Catholic*, Salt Lake City diocesan newspaper. "They may not accomplish what they want because of not spending enough time to draft it carefully."

Nevertheless, Bishop William K. Weigand of Salt Lake City called the legislation "a step forward."

In a statement, Bishop Weigand wrote, "While our Catholic position ... would exclude all abortions without exceptions, the new legislation may better withstand constitutional challenges at this time. It is cer-



AP/Wide World Photos
Pro-choice demonstrators march downtown from the Utah Capitol Jan. 26 to protest a new bill giving Utah the most restrictive abortion statute in the country.

tainly a step forward in restoring at least some measure of legal protection of the right of life for the unborn."

The clause allowing abortions when a woman's medical health is in danger was added by the House Jan. 24, amid concern that the original version might be found unconstitutional.

Three of the four Catholic legislators in Utah voted against the bill; the fourth was not present for the vote.

Democratic Rep. Frank Pignatelli said he didn't think the bill was constitutional and that he would have been more comfortable if it had included more specific time

limits.

Democrats Rep. Blaze Wharton and Sen. Robert Steiner also opposed the bill. Rep. Janet Rose, also a Democrat, was out of town on a family emergency at the time of the vote, but said she was prepared to vote against the bill, citing the state's lack of preventative education and social programs for pregnant women.

Pat Nix, a member of the task force that drafted the original bill, said, "This more liberal bill allows for quality judgments to be made on human life. Down's syndrome could be seen as a 'grave defect.' I am not at all happy with the bill's amendments."

New York seeks \$100 million for schools

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The New York Archdiocese made public Jan. 29 a three-year campaign it has started to raise \$100 million from businesses and foundations to help overcome a crisis officials say is threatening the continued existence of 140 inner-city elementary and secondary schools.

A group of prominent businessmen has formed a Partnership for Quality Education for the campaign, which in nine months has raised \$15 million, mostly in pledges. Officials hope to reach \$40 million by July.

Heading the drive is the president of New York Telephone Company, Frederick V. Salerno.

Others involved include media baron Rupert Murdoch and such executives as Frank A. Bennack Jr. of the Hearst Corporation, Alan C. Greenberg of the investment firm Bear Stearns, Thomas G. Labrecque of Chase Manhattan Bank, Thomas S. Murphy of Capital Cities/ABC and William A. Schreyer of Merrill Lynch.

Salerno said at a press conference he and other businessmen wanted to help the schools survive because "we need quality employees."

The New York Archdiocese has a total of 243 parish elementary schools and 59

high schools.

Monsignor Hugh F. McManus, archdiocesan vicar of education, said the inner-city schools, enrolling over 50,000 students, are those that serve high percentages of minority and low-income families.

Information released Jan. 29 said the \$100 million would provide: \$25 million in tuition assistance and scholarship awards; \$22 million "to attract and retain quality teachers;" \$24 million for "program needs;" and \$29 million for facilities.

Late last year, Monsignor McManus asked all archdiocesan schools that receive subsidies to plan for possible cuts averaging 50 percent in those subsidies for the 1991-92 academic year.

The priest said after the press conference the schools would have to continue such plans because any money raised by the partnership would not be available soon enough to affect decisions to be made now.

A clustering of schools is a first step,

Monsignor McManus said, adding that he expected fewer than 10 schools to close.

Monsignor Henry J. Mansell, archdiocesan chancellor, said some needs to be met by the campaign were one-time problems but added that "we will be in the fundraising mode for years to come."

New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor said the archdiocese also was straining to raise millions of dollars for its health care programs to offset funding cuts made by state and local governments.

"I have to worry about a huge array of costs," he said. "We are bordering on a real crisis. At times I can't seem to convince people we are in serious straits, and something's going to have to give."

Other financial campaigns include one to raise \$100 million for parishes' special needs. Last November Cardinal O'Connor created the post of vicar for development, naming Auxiliary Bishop Patrick V. Ahern as vicar.

Sisters of Mercy meet to discuss the merger of units this summer

ST. LOUIS (CNS) — Members of more than a dozen U.S.-based Sisters of Mercy congregations met in St. Louis Jan. 25-28 to prepare for a merger of their independent units.

In July, the sisters will be formally brought together as the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, completing a 10-year process. Members of the merged congregations serve in North America, South America, Central America, Guam and the Philippines.

The merged order will unite about 7,400 Mercy sisters. The Sisters of Mercy of the Union, composed of nine provinces, will join with 16 other Mercy congregations to form one institute with 25 regional communities in the United States.

The merged order will be the largest religious order in the United States and the largest English-speaking order in the world. Currently, 16,000 Sisters of Mercy serve worldwide.

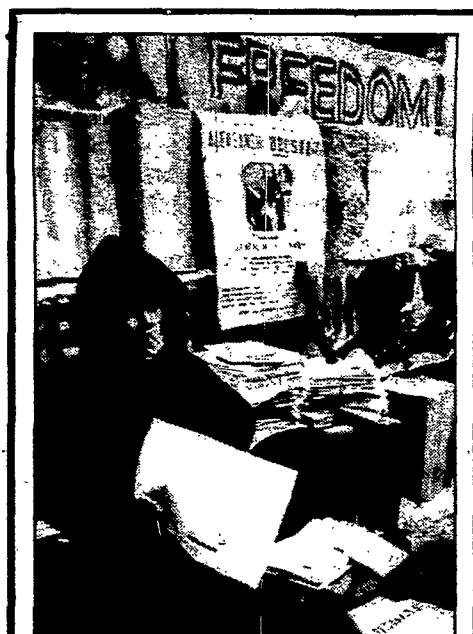
The communities share a common

founder, Catherine McAuley, who began the order in 1831 in Dublin, Ireland, and was declared venerable in 1990. The first U.S. community of Mercy Sisters was established in Pittsburgh in 1843.

Sister of Mercy Amy Hoey, a member of the order's transitional administrative team, said unification "will enhance our ministry. We will be able to do things together that we were not able to do as separate groups."

Diminishing numbers of members has not been a factor, Sister Hoey told the *St. Louis Review*, archdiocesan newspaper. "But we don't ignore that and we also hope that it will put in place the structures that will make us most effective in the future."

Sisters of Mercy hospital and health systems in St. Louis, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Detroit and Radnor, Pa., comprise the second-largest health-care system in the United States. The Sisters of Mercy also operate 18 colleges in the United States.



AP/Wide World Photos
NEWS AT THE BARRICADE — A Lithuanian boy sells newspapers next to the barricade surrounding the Lithuanian Parliament in Vilnius Feb. 1. Lithuanians are bracing for the first joint army and Interior Ministry patrols in the Baltics and other Soviet cities. President Vytautas Landsbergism called the patrols "a new act of aggression."

Archbishop Runcie of Canterbury retires after leading Church of England for 11 years

By Robert Nowell
Catholic News Service

LONDON — Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury, Anglicanism's spiritual leader for the past 11 years, ended his term Jan. 31.

Anglican Archbishop John Habgood of York called 69-year-old Archbishop Runcie's tenure an "outstanding ministry."

He said that because the Canterbury post has "plenty of influence (but) very little actual power," the Anglican leader had to be highly sensitive and "persuasive rather than directive."

Archbishop Habgood said that Archbishop Runcie's regard for history was

possibly the key to his style, which enabled him to steady and maintain the Anglican Church through a trying period.

During Archbishop Runcie's tenure, some of the national churches in the worldwide Anglican Communion opened the priesthood and the hierarchy to women. The result was sometimes acrimonious debate in the Church of England, the communion's mother church, over whether it would similarly open the clergy. The question remains unsettled.

Archbishop Runcie favored putting the issue before Anglican dioceses for discussion.

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