

# Pro-life advocates fight battle on many fronts

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pro-life advocates continued to fight abortion skirmishes in a variety of arenas in April, as longtime abortion regulations were under consideration in Congress and in state courts around the country.

In Congress, committee actions moved forward the controversial Freedom of Choice Act, as well as legislation to make it a federal crime to block access to abortion clinics and to increase funding for the Title X family planning program that can now include abortion counseling.

A spokesman for President Clinton said the president's proposed budget would include funds for abortion under the federal portion of Medicaid. Such funding has been prohibited since 1976 under the Hyde Amendment (Rep. Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill).

Clinton also was expected to work for repeal of the 1985 Kemp-Kasten law which has prohibited U.S. funding of any organization that supports a coercive abortion program.

Attempts to bring the French abortion pill RU-486 into the U.S. market advanced with the announcement that a copy of the pill is being manufactured in America. Clinton has ordered a study of RU-486 before deciding whether to lift a ban on its importation for personal use.

State actions on abortion included:

- A New York appeals court ruled the state's prenatal care program for the working poor is unconstitutional because it does not pay for abortions.
- A brief block on enforcement of



AP/Wide World Photos  
Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, speaks during an April 2 news conference in Washington, D.C. The conference was sponsored by physicians seeking access to the French abortion pill RU-486.

a North Dakota law requiring a 24-hour waiting period for an abortion.

• A Michigan judge's decision to let a Michigan parental consent law — under injunction since August — take effect March 31.

The Freedom of Choice Act — which has been the object of an intensive lobbying campaign by Catholics and other pro-life advocates — was approved by the Senate Labor Committee March 24 and was expected to go before the full Senate by mid-April.

As written, the bill would allow states to pass only laws requiring parental notification and protecting the rights of medical workers to refuse to perform abortions.

1994 and \$270.5 million in 1995.

Under the Reagan and Bush administrations, clinics that received Title X money were prohibited from discussing abortion with patients. The order was rescinded by President Clinton in his first week in office.

On the House floor March 24 and 25, members defeated an attempt to amend the funding bill to require that minors notify a parent before they receive abortions at clinics affiliated with Title X agencies.

The Hyde Amendment permits federal funding of abortion only "where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term." The National Right to Life Committee said those instances averaged less than 100 abortions a year over the past five years.

Among state developments on the abortion question was a March 23 decision by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court that the Prenatal Care Assistance Program violates the due process clause of the state constitution.

Catholic analysts expressed frustration at having been denied a full voice in the case and reasserted their claim that the New York Constitution cannot properly be read as protecting a right to abortion. The program will continue pending a final decision by the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court.

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