

104th Congress will be interesting

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Forget the Republican landslide. The result of the 1994 elections that might be most interesting to the Catholic Church is the pro-life landslide.

"In this election, not a single pro-life incumbent member of Congress (or governor) of either party was defeated by a pro-abortion challenger," said Carol Long, director of the National Right to Life Political Action Committee. "But over two dozen hard-core incumbent pro-abortion members of Congress were defeated by pro-life challengers."

In addition to the defeat by pro-life challengers of 29 House incumbents who support legal abortion, another 34

candidates judged to be pro-life by the National Right to Life Committee won open seats in the House of Representatives.

In the Senate, pro-life candidates beat incumbents in Pennsylvania and Tennessee and took open seats in Arizona, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma and Wyoming, as well as Tennessee's second Senate seat. Of the 11 newly elected senators, only Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, is seen as a strong supporter of legal abortion.

The yardstick used by the National Right to Life Committee to decide if the candidate was pro-life is whether he or she opposes the Freedom of Choice Act and abortion funding in federal health programs, not whether the candidate has declared a desire to overturn *Roe vs.*

Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

By that yardstick, Republicans Sonny Bono of California and Rick Smith of Washington, who won House seats, end up counted on the pro-life side, although both support legal abortion in the first trimester.

Long and Douglas Johnson, federal legislative director for the NRLC, estimate that the pro-life side gained 40 seats in the House and six in the Senate. Long called it a "stunning defeat" for President Clinton and other backers of government-funded abortion.

Although there was a slight difference in the numbers, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League agreed that there had been a significant shift to a pro-life Congress.

Advocates for disabled decry state's OK of assisted suicide

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Approval by Oregon voters of a proposal to permit physician-assisted suicide brought an outcry of dismay from Catholic leaders and alarm from advocates for the disabled.

"The dismissive attitude toward vulnerable human life reflected in this vote is a cancer more lethal than any physical ailment," said Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, chairman of the bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

"It should be prevented from spreading to the rest of our body politic, and ultimately cured by generous doses of love, compassion and truth," he added.

Oregon's Measure 16 will allow a patient with an expected life span of six months or less to ask a doctor to provide a lethal dose of drugs. At least two doctors must agree that the patient's condition is terminal and the patient must request the drugs at least three times, including once in writing.

The measure passed by a margin of 52 percent to 48 percent in the Nov. 8 election, making Oregon the first jurisdiction in the world to decriminalize physician-assisted suicide. The Netherlands permits physicians to sidestep prosecution if they follow strict guidelines for euthanasia.

The Catholic bishops of Oregon said they are very concerned about the future for their state and the nation after the euthanasia proposal was approved.



AP/Wide World Photos

An unidentified man from the border town of Matamoros, Mexico, Nov. 9 scales a fence topped with barbed wire on his way into Brownsville, Texas. Residents of Brownsville plan to keep an eye on their borders as they watch for effects of California's passage of Proposition 187.

Prelate calls for calm, promises court fight over Proposition 187

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles called for "calm and reason" following the passage of an anti-immigrant initiative. He said he hoped court challenges would keep the measure from ever taking effect.

The cardinal, in Rome for meetings at the Vatican, said in a statement issued by his Los Angeles office that approval of Proposition 187 by 59 percent of the state's voters "adds another sad chapter to the history of California."

Proposition 187, the so-called "Save Our State" initiative, will deny public education, social services and non-emergency health care to illegal immigrants. Catholic leaders, in collaboration with representatives of other reli-

gions, had opposed the initiative.

"I would encourage all those who will be affected by this initiative to proceed with calm and reason as the impact of this initiative begins to be felt by those in our communities — undocumented immigrants; those who are legal residents but who may be suspected as undocumented; teachers; doctors and nurses; social service workers; and law enforcement officers," Cardinal Mahony said.

He said he hoped "that the major provisions of this initiative — those which clearly go against prior constitutional precedents and common human decency — will be turned back by our courts and never be permanently implemented."

HART MONUMENT COMPANY

Since 1856

Monuments, Markers
and Cemetery Lettering

2301 Dewey Avenue
(OPPOSITE HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY)

(716) 865-6746

Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home



1270 Norton Street
544-5000

DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc.

(Across from St. Theodore's Church)

Dominic A. DiPonzio - Lic. Mgr.
Christopher B. DiPonzio - L.F.D.
Joseph D. DiPonzio - L.F.D.

219 Spencerport Road • Rochester
429-6700

Douglas C. Meeson

"Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years"

Robert E. Vay

Vay-Schleich & Meeson Funeral Home, Inc.

2692 Dewey Avenue

663-2100

1075 Long Pond Road

GOP is warned to use new power carefully

WASHINGTON — As Republicans take control of the House and Senate for the first time in decades, the party needs to use its new power judiciously or face the same ouster the incumbents anger from voters in a few years, GOP activists said Nov. 11. In a Washington forum sponsored by the Project for the Republican Future, Reagan-era Cabinet member William J. Bennett joined other panelists in attempting to define prospects for limiting government under the new make-up of Congress. Bennett, who was secretary of education and headed Reagan's drug policy task force, cautioned that the Republicans elected on promises of cutting government are obliged to live up to their campaign rhetoric.

Pa. diocese will close 38 parishes by 2000

HOLLIDAYSBURG, Pa. — The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown has started a plan that would close 38 of its 135 parishes by 2000, with 18 of the closings taking place next year. Other parishes will be clustered to share a priest's services. "God's priests ought to be where God's people are," said Bishop Joseph V. Ad mee at an Oct. 31 press conference announcing the plan at chancery offices in Hollidaysburg. The plan was unanimously affirmed by the diocese's priests, meeting at an assembly the week before. "We've been pleasantly surprised at how well it's been accepted," said diocesan spokesman Father Timothy Stem about the plan.

N. Y. cardinal receives Knights' highest honor

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The Knights of Columbus has named Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York as recipient of its highest honor, the Gaudium et Spes Award, for outstanding humanitarian service in Christ's name. "Cardinal O'Connor is a man whose record of service to church and country is equaled by few and surpassed by none," said Supreme Knight Virgil C. Dechant in announcing the selection from the fraternal organization's New Haven headquarters. "He has served as a religious leader (and) moral guide not only for Catholics but for people of all faiths," Dechant said, "and his charitable works have touched the entire community."

TV documentary about Mother Teresa blasted

LONDON — A British television documentary has drawn fierce protest after claiming that Mother Teresa of Calcutta coddles dictators and the wealthy while advising the poor to endure their fate. The Channel 4 documentary also said the woman religious, who won a Nobel peace prize for her work with the destitute, pushes a strongly political message and consorts with criminals and dictators. The documentary's producer and on-air host, Christopher Hitchens, described Mother Teresa as a "leading member of the pope's fundamentalist tendency" for her opposition to abortion and contraception. The documentary called her "Hell's Angel." Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster called the broadcast "a grotesque caricature."