

Born-Alive Infants Protection Act approved

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Senate gave final congressional approval July 18 to the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act which was then sent to President Bush, who was expected to sign the legislation.

The bill, approved unanimously in the Senate, would guarantee certain rights under federal law to children born alive, even during an abortion. The House approved the legislation by a voice vote in March.

In another abortion-related action, the House Judiciary Committee on July 17 approved the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, designed to respond to concerns raised in the U.S. Supreme Court's Stenberg vs. Carhart decision in 2000.

The Born-Alive Infants Protection Act would amend the legal definitions of "per-

son," "human being," "child" and "individual" to include a live birth that has occurred as part of an abortion procedure. The bill defines a child as "born alive" only if he or she displays a heartbeat, respiration and/or voluntary movements after "the complete expulsion or extraction from his or her mother."

Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, said "This bill says that every infant born alive, even during an abortion and even if premature, is a full legal person under federal law."

In a statement last March, the Bush administration said it "strongly supports" the legislation which "would ensure that infants who are born alive, at any stage of de-

velopment, are individual human beings who are entitled to the full protections of the law" and "would provide guaranteed legal protection whether or not the infant's delivery was natural or the result of an abortion."

Also last March, Cathy Cleaver, director of planning and information at the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, called the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act "common-sense legislation that is unfortunately needed at this time when lives of children born and unborn are becoming increasingly seen as 'more expendable.'"

"This bill simply addresses how we as a society should see the child who survives an abortion, and how we should define that," she added.

In a statement July 18 praising the House Judiciary Committee's 20-8 vote, Cleaver called partial-birth abortion "a particularly cruel and unnecessary procedure that Americans have grown to hate."

Legislation banning partial-birth abortion passed Congress twice but was vetoed by President Clinton on both occasions. President Bush has said he would sign a bill to ban partial-birth abortion.

More than half the states have enacted laws to ban partial-birth abortion, and polls have shown that at least 70 percent of Americans support such a ban.

"Americans agree: Partial-birth abortion has no place in a country which believes in compassion and dignity for all," Cleaver said.



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Inside This Week



German youths visit Rochester
Parish families serve as hosts for their stay — Page 2

Program lowers cost of medicine
Medicine Express helps people save — Page 3



Toronto pilgrims make local stop
Aron church houses for teens overnight — Page 6



Bill Wittman/CNS

A boat leaves a wake on the water of Lake Simcoe as it leaves Strawberry Island in Ontario, Canada. Pope John Paul II is spending a few days of rest at a modest Basilian retreat center on the island before celebrating a welcoming ceremony July 25, and a vigil and Mass July 27-28, in Toronto for World Youth Day.

Strawberry Island, a tiny piece of land on Lake Simcoe in Ontario, Canada, is run by the Order of St. Basil and serves as a vacation spot and retreat center for Basilian priests and their guests. The facility can accommodate no more than 75 people at a time.

Ironically, this week's guest of honor at the peaceful, serene site has created mass excitement for hundreds of thousands of people in Toronto, just 90 miles to the south.

Pope John Paul II is staying on Strawberry Island for a few days of rest while also attending to his role as leader of World Youth Day. There are perhaps 30 to 40 people on the island this week — members of the pope's party, Strawberry Island staff and security.

And yet, despite the group's limited size, several links to the Diocese of Rochester can be found.

Serving as host for the pope's visit is Father Dennis Kauffman, the superior of Strawberry Island. Father Kauffman, a Rochester native who served for eight years as guidance counselor at Aquinas Institute and superior of the Basilian residence there, said that when he began the summer position at Strawberry Island two years ago,

More WYD coverage on Page 10

he had no inkling one of his future guests would be the pope.

"No way, it was the furthest thought from my mind. We're awed," Father Kauffman said during a July 16 telephone interview.

Father Kauffman also has leaned on his Rochester connections for World Youth Day by importing the former cook at the Basilian residence, Helen Lopuchowycz, to prepare meals for the pope and his entourage. And Father James Murphy, who just completed his priest internship year at Church of Christ the King in Irondequoit, is also spending this week on the island as a member of its management team.

To top it all off, another Rochester native, Father Thomas Rosica, is chief operating officer of World Youth Day 2002. As head honcho, the Basilian priest has been preparing for the colossal event for three years, meeting several times with the pope during that stretch.

The Basilian order is based in Toronto. Father Murphy said the Rochester ties are plentiful because this diocese has traditionally been one of the Basilians' chief areas of service — particularly at Aquinas In-

stitute, St. John Fisher College and Christ the King Parish.

"If the Basilians are involved in anything, inevitably you would have a Rochester connection," he said.

The inner, inner circle

Pope John Paul was due to arrive at Strawberry Island by helicopter on Tuesday afternoon, July 23. Although World Youth Day officially began July 18, the pontiff was to remain on the island until Thursday, July 25, when he is scheduled to fly to Toronto for a 4:30 p.m. papal welcoming ceremony at Exhibition Place. He will return to Strawberry Island that evening and then leave the island for good on Saturday, in time for his 7:30 p.m. appearance at the overnight vigil at Downsview Park, a former Canadian military base north of Toronto. He will also celebrate the 9:30 a.m. closing Mass on Sunday, staying overnight both Saturday and Sunday at Morrow Park, the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto.

Father Kauffman said his duties during the pontiff's stay on Strawberry Island are pretty basic — "just coordinating between the papal party, the (police) author-

Continued on page 10

STORY BY MIKE LATONA