

Abortion issue receiving increasing national attention

Bill requiring parental consent for minors gets boost in N.C.

By KARI BARLOW
Staff Writer

The N.C. House passed a bill last week that would require girls under 18 to get parental consent for an abortion, stirring further debate on the abortion issue in the General Assembly.

Chances are "better than even" the bill will pass the Senate, said Rep. Paul Stam Jr., R-Wake, chief sponsor of the bill.

He was prompted to sponsor the bill after he received a phone call eight years ago from a mother whose daughter had had an abortion during a school day without consulting her, Stam said.

Parents should be involved with their daughters' decisions, especially when she is a minor, Stam said.

The bill provides for a judge to approve the abortion for girls who cannot turn to their parents.

"If we don't pass (the bill), North Carolina will soon become the haven to which (girls) repair to keep from telling their mamas in other states," Stam said.

Sen. Paul Smith, R-Rowan, said he supports the bill without question and that such an important decision should not be left up to a child.

The opponents of the bill claim it is unfair to take away the choice of the girl and that the bill is unnecessary.

"The majority of the girls do involve their parents," said Margaret Beck Odom, public affairs coordinator of Planned Parenthood of Greater Raleigh. "The problem is you're dealing with the other 10 to 20 percent."

Those girls who do not talk to their parents have a real reason not to, Odom said. Many are from dysfunctional families.

"The worst thing you can do is try and force someone into a decision they don't feel comfortable with," Odom said.

The provision of judicial approval does not help the situation, she said. "You're sending the girl under the most amount of stress to court. They are going to a judge, and they're going to discuss really intimate details in her life."

Rep. Anne Barnes, D-Orange, who voted against the bill, said the court process will not provide confidentiality.

Stam and other supporters of the bill said parents should give consent in an abortion decision just as they would in other health decisions.

"Being pregnant does not impart a young woman with any great wisdom," Stam said.

Odom said pregnancy is different from other medical issues and not all other medical issues require parental consent.

"There are certain cases under North Carolina law where the state recognizes the fact that getting treatment fast is more important than getting parental consent," Odom said. "Those situations are spelled out in statutes."

Doctors and health care services can require parental consent without a parental-consent law, Odom said.

"We have a big sign in our office that says 'We won't tell your parents, but you should,'" Odom said.

If the bill passes, North Carolina is regressing and is headed for the days of back-alley abortions, said Daniel Pollitt, a Kenan professor of law at UNC.

"I think there are going to be abortions whether anyone likes it or not," Pollitt said. "It's better if they are sanitary and not unsanitary."

Sen. Wanda Hunt, D-Orange, said the intent of the bill was good, but it should not assume all girls have a good rapport with their parents.

Hunt said out of the four female senators in the General Assembly, three were opposed to the bill. Their arguments and the fact they are female may persuade some legislators to re-think their votes, she said.

Susan Hill, director of the Raleigh Women's Health Organization, said the bill was just one more attempt to limit access to abortion.

Minors in North Carolina will travel to states where no parental consent is required to have an abortion, Hill said.

"Laws don't make mothers and daughters talk," Hill said. "You really can't legislate good communication between parents and children."



Students attend a vigil to support women's rights to abortion

DTH/Evan Elle

Activists for women's rights to hold march in Washington

By KATIE WOLFE
Staff Writer

Over one-half million demonstrators plan to participate in The March for Women's Equality and Women's Lives, sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), on April 9 in Washington, D.C. Representatives from more than 400 colleges and universities, including UNC, are expected to attend.

"The purpose of the march is for justice," said Joy Osborne, Raleigh Coordinator of NOW. "The two big issues are the Equal Rights Amendment and reproductive freedom — not only access to safe, legal abortions but for birth control to be available to everyone."

"We would like to let the present administration know we are not going to put up with the harassing of women's rights, like the former administration," she said.

Activating Awareness for Choice and Equality (AAACE) supports the march on the UNC campus, AAACE president Tania Malik said.

The march is in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to hear the case of Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services in May, according to a press release from NOW. The case, based on a 2-year-old Missouri law, prohibits the use of public funds and services for abortions that are not necessary to save a woman's life.

"The case will probably not be able to overturn the Roe vs. Wade decision

but instead make the abortion issue more restrictive," Osborne said. "The Supreme Court doesn't often overturn a decision that has already been made, but we believe this decision could be the beginning of a series to chip away at a woman's reproductive freedom."

The march is scheduled only 15 days before oral arguments for the Webster case begin in the Supreme Court.

"The march will send a clear and compelling message that we will fight back to keep abortion and birth control safe, legal and accessible," said Molly Yard, president of NOW. "We will not give up until women are included in the Constitution." No pro-life groups have planned a counterdemonstration.

"We simply see no reason to," said Leonard Dinegar, assistant director of public affairs for the National Right-to-Life Committee. "A march shouldn't have any effect on a Supreme Court decision."

"Their job is to interpret the Constitution, not represent the public opinion as legislators. They should not be swayed by a demonstration," he said.

The Right-to-Life Committee will hold a press conference in Washington, D.C., the day before the Missouri case will be heard.

Anyone interested in attending the march should contact the Chapel Hill NOW chapter or AAACE on campus.

California judge sets bail for Hatcher

From Associated Press reports

SAN FRANCISCO — A Municipal Court judge set bail at \$1 million Wednesday for an American Indian who is fighting extradition to North Carolina, where he is charged with 14 counts of kidnapping in a protest at a newspaper office.

A lawyer for Eddie Hatcher said the order was "the court's way of denying my motion for bail." The lawyer, Harris Taback, said he would ask for a reduction in bail sometime in the next few weeks.

Taback also said Hatcher's lawyers will seek a hearing before Gov. George Deukmejian, who must decide whether to approve the extradition request when it arrives from North Carolina. Hatcher says his life would be in danger from law enforcement authorities in Robeson County, N.C., whom he has accused of drug-dealing and corruption.

Hatcher, 31, was arraigned before Judge Alfred Wollenberg two days after the federal government dropped an unlawful-flight charge and allowed

his case to be transferred from federal to state court. The transfer lets Harris fight extradition by alleging that he would be in danger or could not get a fair trial in North Carolina.

Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs, 20, both Tuscarora Indians, were accused of holding as many as 20 people hostage for 10 hours in the offices of The Robesonian newspaper in Lumberton, N.C., in February 1988.

They said they were trying to draw attention to their claims of official corruption. A task force formed by

Gov. Jim Martin concluded later that the claims were unfounded.

Jacobs was arrested in New York state and returned last week to Lumberton, where bail was set at \$100,000. Hatcher was arrested in San Francisco after unsuccessfully seeking asylum at the Soviet consulate March 10.

Taback said Hatcher "had no hope that the Soviets were going to grant him asylum" but instead had been trying to draw media attention to his reappearance and his plight.

See "The Homeless Question in Chapel Hill" in Monday's DTH

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