
NEBRASKA CATHOLICS FOR LIFE

Volume 8, Issue 2

"Pray Think Act"

June 2009

An Amazing Shift in Public Opinion

By Greg Schleppenbach

Call it irony—or Divine Providence. On the same weekend that Notre Dame was honoring our pro-abortion President; a new Gallup Poll was released showing—for the first time since the poll's origin in 1995—a majority of U.S. adults now identify themselves as pro-life.

Fifty one percent of those polled identified themselves as pro-life, while 42 percent called themselves pro-choice. This is an amazing shift from just one year ago when 50 percent identified themselves as pro-choice and 44 percent as pro-life.

According to report issued by Gallup, the sources of this shift are clear. First, the "percentage of Republicans (including independents who lean Republican) calling themselves 'pro-life' rose by 10 points over the past year, from 60% to 70%..." Those calling themselves "pro-choice" dropped from 36% to 26%.

The poll shows virtually no change in the views of Democrats and Democratic leaners with 61% calling themselves pro-choice versus 33% calling themselves pro-life. This dichotomy is also seen by ideology as the poll found that "all of the increase in pro-life sentiment is seen among self-identified conservatives and moderates; the abortion views of political liberals have not changed."

Second, "the swelling of the pro-life position since last year is seen across Christian religious affiliations, including an eight-point gain among Protestants and a seven-point gain among Catholics." The percentage of pro-life Protestants increased from 51% to 59%. The percentage of pro-life Catholics increased from 45% to 52%. That Catholics are less likely to identify themselves as pro-life than Protestants is a sad parenthetical to this otherwise good news.

Third, Gallup noted that the views of both men and women have shifted into the pro-life column. Last year, the Gallup poll found more women identifying themselves as pro-choice than pro-life by 50% to 43%. This year, those numbers have basically flipped with 49% of women saying they are pro-life and 44% saying they're pro-choice.

The shift in opinion among men was even more dramatic. Last year, this poll found 49% of men identifying as pro-choice and 46% as pro-life. This year, the poll has 54% of men identifying as pro-life and just 39% as pro-choice. According to Gallup, "this

is the first time in nine years of Gallup Values surveys that significantly more men and women are pro-life than pro-choice." The shift in opinion among men was even more dramatic. Last year, this poll found 49% of men identifying as pro-choice and 46% as pro-life. This year, the poll has 54% of men identifying as pro-life and just 39% as pro-choice. According to Gallup, "this is the first time in nine years of Gallup Values surveys that significantly more men and women are pro-life than pro-choice."

The Gallup Poll also showed that American attitudes are also shifting toward supporting more restrictions on abortion. The percentage of those who think abortion should be illegal in all (23%) or most (37%) circumstances is now 60% (it was 57% last year).

More significant is the shift in what Gallup calls the "extreme views" on abortion. Last year 28% of Americans said abortion should be legal in all circumstances versus 17% who said it should be illegal in all circumstances. This year, 22% said abortion should be legal in all circumstances and 23% said it should be illegal in all circumstances. That is a whopping 12 point shift in opinion.

The results of this Gallup poll were confirmed in three other recent surveys. Gallup's daily tracking poll, a Pew Research poll and a Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll all showed the same dramatic shift toward the pro-life position.

These polls are among a number of very positive signs indicating that President Obama's dismantling of federal pro-life policies is re-energizing the pro-life movement. Even Gallup acknowledged this dynamic saying this about the "bottom line" of the poll:

"With the first pro-choice president in eight years already making changes to the nation's policies on funding abortion overseas, expressing his support for the Freedom of Choice Act, and moving toward rescinding federal job protections for medical workers who refuse to participate in abortion procedures, Americans...seem to be taking a step back from the pro-choice position."

People of faith know that God can bring good out of any situation. Perhaps President Obama's frontal assault on pro-life policies will cause the pro-life movement to emerge a stronger and more effective force for restoring the right to life of our unborn brothers and sisters. Let us pray, fast and work that this may be so.

See poll at www.gallup.com (search "abortion")

Conversion, Not Death

By Greg Schleppenbach

The Serran Prayer for Vocations begins with these words: "O God, Who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live..." These are among the first words that came to mind upon learning about the murder of George Tiller, the late-term abortion doctor from Wichita.

As a part of my work leading the Nebraska Bishops' pro life office, I try to repeatedly remind my fellow Christians that the battle against death has been won by our Lord and Savior. Although evil (such as abortion) still exists and must be fiercely opposed our ultimate responsibility as Christians and pro-life activists is the salvation of souls, not defeating the culture of death *at all costs*.

Although Dr. Tiller perpetrated unspeakable evil in killing tens of thousands of unborn babies (many of which were very late term), the man who murdered him "has done a gravely wicked thing", Dr. Robert George said. Dr. George, a prominent Catholic law professor at Princeton University, went on to say that "[t]he evil of this action is in no way diminished by the blood George Tiller had on his own hands. "No private individual had the right to execute judgment against him. We are a nation of laws. Lawless violence breeds only more lawless violence," Dr. George continued. Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities issued this statement on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"Our bishops' conference and all its members have repeatedly and publicly denounced all forms of violence in our society, including abortion as well as the misguided resort to violence by anyone opposed to abortion. Such killing is the opposite of everything we stand for, and everything we want our culture to stand for: respect for the life of each and every human being from its beginning to its natural end. We pray for Dr. Tiller and his family."

It is absolutely important for pro-life leaders to condemn—unequivocally—this and all acts of violence as a response to the violence of abortion. But it is equally important for us to condemn the predictable attempts by abortion advocates to use this tragedy, perpetrated by one (apparently unstable) person, to accuse the entire pro-life movement of complicity.

Sadly, it's not just the usual cast of pro-abortion leaders who are trying to convict all pro-lifers of bearing some responsibility for Dr. Tiller's death. Most media outlets and even President Obama seem to be uncritically embracing such accusations. Their unjust accusations, however, were almost immediately exposed as duplicitous by their response (or lack thereof) to the murder and wounding of two army

recruiters in Arkansas a day after Dr. Tiller was killed.

As Michelle Malkin pointed out in her June 3 column, "Both crimes are despicable, cowardly acts of domestic terrorism. But the disparate treatment of the two brutal cases by both the White House and the media is striking. President Obama issued a statement condemning 'heinous acts of violence' within hours of Tiller's death. The Justice Department issued its own statement and sent federal marshals to protect abortion clinics."

"By contrast," Malkin continues, "Obama was silent [until several days later] about the military recruiter attacks...The Justice Department was mum. And so were the legions of finger-pointing pundits happily convicting the pro-life movement and every right-leaning writer on the planet of contributing to the murder of Tiller."

The pro-life movement must continue to proclaim the truth, with love, about the injustice and evil of abortion. And, as difficult as it can be at times, we must do so with the confidence and peace of knowing that the battle against death has been won. God does not ask us to defeat death and He "wills not the death of a sinner". God asks us to faithfully and unceasingly choose and defend life so "that all may be converted and live."

Late-Term Abortions are Never Necessary: Former Abortionist

By Thaddeus M. Baklinski

WASHINGTON, DC, June 22, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com) –

A former abortionist who is now the president elect of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists has written a persuasive discourse questioning whether late-term abortion is ever necessary.

Writing in the Family Research Council's website Dr. Mary L. Davenport, M.D., FACOG, observed that following the murder of Kansas abortionist George Tiller on May 31, 2009, and the subsequent announcement of the closing of Tiller's facility, public attention has again focused on the issue of late-term abortion.

The president of the Center for Reproductive Rights, an abortion advocacy legal organization, claimed that the closing of Tiller's clinic left "an immediate and immense void in the availability of abortion." But Dr. Davenport asks if late-term abortion is ever really necessary, questioning whether the demise of a facility where late-term abortions were performed leave a "void" that is harmful to women.

Referring to a statement by Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, who admitted in 1997 that the vast majority of partial-birth abortions were performed on healthy mothers and babies, Dr. Davenport explains that "contrary to the assertion of abortion rights supporters that late-term abortion is performed for serious reasons, surveys of late abortion patients confirm that the vast majority occur because of delay in diagnosis of pregnancy. They are done

Ultrasound Bill (LB 675) Now Law

for similar reasons as early abortions: relationship problems, young or old maternal age, education or financial concerns."

"Most of Tiller's abortions conformed to the generally elective character of these late-term procedures," writes Davenport. "Peggy Jarman of the Pro-Choice Action League stated that about three-fourths of Tiller's late-term patients were teenagers who denied to themselves or their families that they were pregnant until that fact could no longer be obscured."

Considering the claim that serious maternal health problems require abortions, Dr. Davenport states that "intentional abortion for maternal health, particularly after viability, is one of the great deceptions used to justify all abortion."

"The very fact that the baby of an ill mother is viable raises the question of why, indeed, it is necessary to perform an abortion to end the pregnancy. With any serious maternal health problem, termination of pregnancy can be accomplished by inducing labor or performing a cesarean section, saving both mother and baby."

Davenport points out that fetal problems "are the other serious rationale for considering abortion." However, she says, despite advances in ultrasound diagnosis, these diagnoses are not always accurate, and cases have occurred where women have declined to abort their ostensibly sick child, only for the child to be born perfectly healthy.

Even in the most serious circumstances - fatal fetal abnormalities - writes Davenport, there is no good reason to abort the child. As an alternative to abortion for fatal birth defects, Dr. Davenport proposes a perinatal hospice, which involves continuing the pregnancy until labor begins and giving birth normally, in a setting of comfort and support until natural death of the child occurs.

Dr. Davenport cites the case of Karen Santorum, a nurse and the wife of former Senator Rick Santorum, who was faced with the prospect of her own son, Gabriel, being born with a fatal birth defect.

Mrs. Santorum describes how Gabriel lived only two hours, but how in those two hours "we experienced a lifetime of emotions. Love, sorrow, regret, joy - all were packed into that brief span. To have rejected that experience would have been to reject life itself."

Dr. Davenport concludes that "although serious threats to health can occur, there is always a life-affirming way to care for mother and baby, no matter how bleak the prognosis. The elimination of late-term abortion would not create a void in medical care, but would instead result in a more humane world in which vulnerable humans would be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve."

On the last day of its 2009 session, the Nebraska Legislature adopted LB 675, the "Ultrasound Bill" on a final vote of 40-yes, 5-no, 4-not voting!! Look below to see how your senator voted. Governor Dave Heinemann signed the bill into law that same day.

The new law amends our state's informed consent requirement prior to abortion by requiring the following: 1. Inform the mother that she cannot be forced by anyone to have an abortion and has the right to request a list of providers who offer ultrasounds (specifying which ones provide them for free); 2. If an ultrasound is performed prior to the abortion, the abortionist must display the screen so that the mother may choose to see it and tell her that it is displayed for her to see.

If your senator voted for LB 675, please send him/her a note of thanks. If your senator voted no or did not vote, please send him/her a note of disappointment (with all due respect). Senator e-mail addresses can be found here: http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_list.php. Letters can be sent to your senator at, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604.

Sen. Tony Fulton, who introduced and led debate on the bill and Sen. Beau McCoy, who prioritized the bill, as well as their staff, deserve a great deal of gratitude for their hard work and skilled leadership. Please send a special note of thanks to these two senators and their staffs at tfulton@leg.ne.gov and bmccoy@leg.ne.gov or the mailing address above.

VOTING YES (40) Adams, Fischer, Hansen, Mello, Rogert, Ashford, Flood, Harms, McCoy, Schilz, Carlson, Friend, Price, Gay, Heidemann, Nelson, Stuthman, Christensen, Hadley, Fulton, Janssen, Nordquist, Sullivan Coash, Karpisek, Pahls, Utter, Cornett, Giese, Langemeier, Pankonin, Wallman, Dierks, Gloor, Lathrop, Pirsch, White, Dubas, Lautenbaugh, VOTING NO (5) Campbell, Howard, Nantkes, Council, McGill, PRESENT NOT VOTING (3) Avery, Cook, Loudon, EXCUSED (1) Harr

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

Chip Maxwell has produced a great book on stem cell research. Chip is a former state senator who has served for the last several years as executive director of the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research. He's a very talented writer and this short book will equip you with the facts and arguments to effectively oppose unethical stem cell research and support ethical stem cell research. See a sample of the book or order it online at <http://www.checkwithchip.blogspot.com/> or by calling 402-552-0770. Cost is \$9.95.

UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

SAVE THE DATE Bishops' Pro Life Conference October 2 & 3, 2009

The annual Bishops' Pro Life Conference will be held on October 2/3 in Lincoln. Keynote speakers are Archbishop Joseph Naumann from Kansas City, KS (Friday night banquet) and Lila Rose (Saturday noon), the college student who has led several successful undercover investigations exposing racism and sexual abuse cover-ups by Planned Parenthood. Other topics on Saturday are:

- The Power of Grassroots Lobbying: *How to Impact Federal and State Policymaking*
- Adoption: The "I love you to life" Option (Panel with Birth mom, Adoptive parents, adoptee (adult))
- Defending Life at Life's End: *Catholic Ethical Perspectives*
- Empowering Women to Choose Life (Panel with pregnancy-help center staff and abortion clinic ministries)

Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities
Affiliate: Nebraska Catholic Conference
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 310
Lincoln, NE 68508-1813

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Reclaiming Our Generation for Life

Like last year, a "mini-conference" for high school students will be held on October 3 and will include Lila Rose, a post-abortive woman (and man if possible) and a session on pro-life apologetics.

Post-Abortion Aftermath Workshop

On Friday, July 31st, the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities is sponsoring a workshop on the aftermath of abortion featuring Mrs. Vicki Thorn, the founder of **Project Rachel**. The conference is open to anyone interested in the topic, but mental health professionals are particularly urged to attend. A promotional flier with all the workshop details is enclosed. Please help spread the word about this workshop.

Information on these events is online at: <http://www.nebcathcon.org>. Registration brochures for the adult and youth conferences will be mailed in August.

Newsletter made possible by the generous support of
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