

The Death of the Pro-Life Movement
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The victory for Barack Obama and the Democratic Party on Tuesday is the death of the pro-life movement as we know it. The pro-life movement has sought to reverse abortion through legislative action and the courts, and made tremendous gains throughout eight years of George W. Bush, just enough to place the nation at a turning point. Unfortunately, it failed to turn the corner, to the close deal, on November 4, 2008, in large part because of the remarkable unpopularity of President Bush. This terrifically pro-life president will now see his pro-life legacy vanish very quickly.

The nation now faces the once unthinkable approval of the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which Barack Obama says will be the “first thing” he signs as president. FOCA will nationalize abortion, superseding and overturning abortion restrictions in every state. In the words of NARAL Pro-Choice America, the act would “codify Roe v. Wade into law and guarantee a woman’s right to choose in all 50 states.” Or, as the National Organization for Women excitedly proclaims, FOCA would “sweep away hundreds of anti-abortion laws [and] policies.” In one stroke, this bill, introduced in Congress in April 2007—and co-sponsored by Obama—will wipe out all the fully bipartisan abortion restrictions passed by Democratic and Republican legislatures over the past 35 years.

Obama made that promise in a July 17, 2007 speech to Planned Parenthood, a group that he calls a “safety-net provider.” As Obama made clear in that speech, he views abortion-delivery services as basic government services—services in support of a woman’s “fundamental right” to an abortion. With the huge majority he will enjoy from an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, President Obama will get what he wants.

Obama’s defenders tried to explain away his votes in Illinois rejecting medical care for newborns who survive abortions. With FOCA, that shouldn’t matter, since it eliminates state restrictions regardless.

President Obama will also likely secure taxpayer funding of abortion, government-provided abortion for women in the military, American money to international abortion groups like the UNFPA, federal funding of embryonic research, repeal of the Hyde Amendment, and much more.

In essence, we’re looking at the strong possibility of unrestricted, taxpayer-funded abortion through the entirety of a mother’s pregnancy. There will be no Republican legislative body that can check this. Such change promised by Obama is unprecedented in presidential history.

All of that will happen before President Obama even begins appointing pro-choice judges. If I may hazard a prediction, I believe Obama will have not only four years to mold the courts but eight years. He’s the first Democrat since LBJ to win over 50 percent of the vote. Not even Bill Clinton did that. Add in the fact that an astoundingly sympathetic media will protect him, that the economy will fully recover by 2012, that Iraq will not be a liability for him, and you have a two-term presidency in the making.

And yet, November 4 was devastating for the pro-life movement beyond the election of Barack Obama. As a brief summary of what happened around the country that day, here’s a cut-and-paste of the headlines distributed the morning after by the pro-life source LifeNews.com:

- Obama Captures Win Over John McCain, Expected to Promote Abortions

- Washington Becomes Second State to Legalize Assisted Suicide in Vote
- Michigan Voters Approve Proposition 2 to Destroy Human Embryos
- California Very Narrowly Opposes Third Try for Parental Notification
- South Dakota Voters Defeat Second Ballot Measure to Ban Abortions
- Colorado Voters Soundly Defeat Personhood Ballot Measure on Abortion

That says it all. The pro-life movement was battered on Tuesday. The “Culture of Life” was bludgeoned.

This means that the pro-life movement will need to rely not on changing laws—though pro-lifers should still try to do that when they can—but on changing hearts and minds. The strategy has always been to do both, but, now, the latter will need to be the dominant priority.

Tragically, many scared young girls, who otherwise might be stopped from choosing an abortion through parental consent, waiting periods, or any number of additional guidelines, will not face the checks to prompt them to pause for second thought. There are thousands if not millions of post-abortive women in their 40s and 50s who will tell you that they wish to God that there had been some type of restriction that would have given them pause. Without those checks, they chose as they did, and many suffer greatly to this day. There seems little doubt that the abortion rate should rise steadily—after declining consistently in recent years.

This is so utterly dispiriting that many pro-lifers feel helpless. Many may toss in the towel: If this is what America wants, so be it....

But for those still willing to try to help young mothers and their unborn babies, the thrust must now focus on counseling, evangelization, education, on establishing crisis pregnancy centers, on making ultrasound technology more widely available, and generally on one-on-one efforts to convince pregnant girls that they have options.

With the results of November 4, there will likely be another 35 years of *Roe v. Wade*—plus much, much more. Pro-lifers need to regroup and think hard about how to try to ensure that the next 35 years of legalized abortion in America will not produce another 50 million aborted babies.

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