

Abortion appeal could go pro-choice or pro-life

By BONNIE MORTER
Collegian Staff Writer

While the state's Abortion Control Act awaits the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, both pro-life and pro-choice groups are optimistic that the court will rule in their favor.

Deborah Dillard, president of Penn State Students for Life, said she expected the court to refuse Planned Parenthood's injunction against the group sought last week, but did not expect an immediate appeal.

She also said the 24-hour waiting period, which was the only section of the act restrained by the judge, should eventually be reincorporated into the act.

But Beth Miller, secretary of Students for Reproductive Rights, and Barbara Nissley, education director for Harrisburg Reproductive Services, said the 24-hour waiting period is the most "absurd section" of the proposed act.

Nissley reported that 95 percent of the women who come to clinics have made their decision well in advance of their appointment. If patients seem unsure during counseling, Nissley said the clinic discusses alternative options with them and sometimes suggests the patient go home and think about it.

"The waiting period just isn't necessary," she said. "Women either have to make two trips to the clinic or stay overnight. Either way, it means extra costs and a loss of two days' pay if she must miss work."

Nissley said the waiting period can cause an unnecessary delay for women, when because of scheduling conflicts with the clinic, they are unable to get the second appointment

for more than a week. Time is very crucial when the woman is trying to make sure she gets the abortion before the end of the first trimester, she said.

However, Dillard disagreed: "The 24-hour waiting period would make abortion just like any other form of surgery," she said. "You have to wait to have your wisdom teeth pulled. You have to fill out forms and wait for that type of surgery, so why should abortion procedures be any different?"

The additional 24 hours would help stop women from making hasty decisions, Dillard said. She cited Women Exploited, a national group of women who think they were rushed into a decision to have an abortion, as proof that the waiting period is essential.

Other sections of the act, including counseling by the doctor, hospitalization for women undergoing abortions who are more than three months pregnant and attempts to save the aborted fetus also are crucial if abortions are to be viewed as surgery, she said. The act does not prohibit abortions. It works for the best of the mother's health and the health of the unborn child.

Larry Rice, president of the Newman Student Association of the Penn State Catholic Center, which works closely with Students for Life, sided with Dillard.

While Rice's pro-life beliefs are based on his faith, he said abortion is a moral issue and is not based on a person's denomination. "A lot of people think pro-life is run out of the back door of the church, but that's just not true," he said. "Students for Life is an example of a diverse group which opposes abortion."

Rice said counseling should be done by the

doctor and not just any nurse or social worker because in the past women have not always understood the complications that can occur. For example, women in their third trimester are often shocked when their abortions result in live births, he said.

However, Rice said he could not condone hospitalization for abortions because "there is no difference between a murder performed in a clinic and one performed in a hospital."

Nissley said she opposes counseling by the physician because it increases the cost of the procedure and can just as easily be explained by a trained clinician. She also said she opposes required hospitalization because "clinics have the required equipment and can reduce patient cost."

Nissley said many changes would have to be made at clinics if the act goes into effect. Harrisburg Reproductive Health Services would increase fees from \$10 to \$25 to cover extra costs. Nissley said proof of age would be required to ensure the proper procedures for minors. In addition, parents of minors would be required to provide proper identification.

Dillard and Rice said minors should be required to seek parental approval, as proposed in the act. Dillard asked why minors should be allowed to have "major surgery" on their own approval when they have to get a parent's permission to go on a field trip in high school.

Miller said she objects to judicial consent (as an alternative to parental consent) for minors.

"How can the judge decide she is not mature enough to have an abortion and then assume she'll be mature enough to be a mother?" Miller said.

Nissley said she would like another option added for minors where clinic documentation would allow exceptions so that they could make their own decisions. She said she does not oppose parental consent, but thinks the current act does not offer enough alternatives.

Rice said he expected the quick appeal by pro-choice last week, but thinks the act will eventually become law.

"It's a good sign that the Supreme Court is also reconsidering the issue. It's not an isolated state debate. Pro-choice is being fought all over the country," he said.

Miller said she thinks the act's measures will be softened even if it does go into effect, but predicts it will eventually be wiped out. "It will take opposing legislation to get rid of it, but I'm optimistic because the new election brought more pro-choice people into the legislature," she said.

Nissley said the appeal granted Thursday was a "delightful shock" to her clinic.

"It's impossible to predict what will happen now," she said. "We never even expected Gov. Thornburgh to veto the original act last November."

She said the biggest hope of pro-choice advocates now is for the temporary injunction to last until the Supreme Court decides the issue again. The Supreme Court will clarify the issue about when states can and cannot interfere, she said. Nissley estimates the Supreme Court will not reach a decision until spring at the earliest.

In the meantime, Nissley said the pro-choice battle will be easier since state Rep. Greg L. Cunningham, R-Centre County, was voted out of office.

Cunningham represented the 77th District, which includes State College, in his last term. After legislative reappointment, Cunningham decided to run in the newly-formed 171st District. He was defeated by Democrat Ruth Rudy in November's election.

"There are still some pro-life advocates in office like Stephen Freind, R-Delaware County, but none as demanding as Cunningham. He's proof that if you anger enough people, you can be defeated," Nissley said.

"The whole bill is an invasion of privacy and religious liberty," she said. "There has been no conclusion on when personhood, not only life, begins or when the rights of the unborn outweigh those of the woman."

Dillard said the majority opinion of Penn State Students for Life is that abortion should not be performed under any circumstances, including rape or incest.

Rape victims may obtain a drug, which, if taken within 72 hours of the rape, will prevent a pregnancy, she said. Therefore, there is no reason for an abortion.

Rice agreed that abortion should be prohibited in all instances and went one step further: "I don't think rape victims should be allowed to take a pill to prevent pregnancy," Rice said. "That's abortion too."

He said a big problem with pro-choice groups is that they turn out to be pro-abortion and not pro-choice.

Pro-life groups have support from Attorney General Letroy Zimmerman, who asked the appeals court Friday to lift the injunction and install the act. Zimmerman said he made the request because the plaintiffs' arguments would probably not hold up in court.

Organization brings pets to elderly

Dogs really are man's best friend, Lago says

By ANTHONY HUGHES
Collegian Staff Writer

Who ever thought that a little dog standing only inches from the ground could save an elderly woman's life?

It happened — just ask Mary Trostle of State College.

Trostle got her dog through People and Animals Coming Together, a Centre County organization that brings the elderly and pets together. "Sometimes I give her credit for saving my life," she said of her dog.

Last month Trostle fell in her backyard and broke her hip. She yelled for help, but said that it wasn't until her dog started barking that neighbors came to see what was wrong.

"Sometimes I give her credit for saving my life."

Mary Trostle, State College pet owner

To Daniel Lago, assistant professor of human development at the University, there is a lot of truth to the adage that dogs are man's best friends. Lago is conducting a four-year study of PACT to determine how owning pets affects the elderly.

PACT, which is funded by the Green Island Foundation, a privately-owned grant organiza-

tion, will give people 55 or older an animal at their request. Pets make the elderly feel useful and can provide the companionship they may need, he said.

The placement of a pet is done carefully because PACT is mainly concerned with the relationship between the animal and its owner. The animals are either donated by members of the community or animal shelters, and are kept by their new owners for life.

After a pet is placed in a home, PACT assigns volunteers to assist in its grooming, feeding and transportation to the veterinarian. The volunteers try to show the owner that the animal is special.

Lago has been studying about 65 PACT participants for a year, but said it is too soon to tell if the

far and he expects the four-year total to be about \$250,000.

Former studies show that PACT participants suffer less stress, Lago said. Studies also indicate that animals have helped stroke victims by getting them out of the house and walking. The animals also provide comfort to dying elderly people.

PACT participant Lillis Zimmerman of Julian said that although she did not get her dog from PACT, the program has helped her take care of it.

Zimmerman recalled when a pickup truck hit her dog and broke its leg. She said PACT took the dog to the veterinarian.

Lago said if his studies prove PACT successful, he expects that humane societies across the country will create similar programs.

Volunteer Gregg Orloff (11th-microbiology) said the elderly seem happier after receiving a pet. Many of PACT's clients are widows who enjoy the companionship of their pets, he said.

"When the elderly people get their pets, it seems to lighten up their life," Orloff said. "Like having a little kid all over again."

Another volunteer, Janet Crawford (11th-animal biological sciences), said the animals give the elderly a lot of purpose. "You can see the change in a lot of people."

She said the animals help the elderly to exercise, in part, because they must shop for pet food. They also seem to take more care in what they buy to eat for themselves, he said.



Fred Cassick of Black Moshannon holds the dog that he received through PACT, an organization that brings together senior citizens and pets.

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