

Pro-life attacks on Church termed 'trash'

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

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Representatives of a National Pro-Life Political Action Committee in a Post-Register interview Wednesday afternoon sharply criticized U.S. Sen. Frank Church's congressional record on abortion but a Church spokesman termed their statements "more of the same trash that has characterized this campaign against Senator Church."

The representatives were the Rev. Charles Fiore, Order of Preachers, chairman, and Peter B. Gemma, Jr, executive, of the committee which is based at Falls Church, Va.

Fiore said he is a Roman Catholic priest, not a pastor, but a member of the Dominican Order. He said he has taught at St. Thomas in Rome, while Gemma said he is a former Roman Catholic.

The two said of 42 votes in the Senate relating to abortions, Church voted wrong 24 times and right 16 times

On the other hand, they said Church's opponent, Republican Congressman Steve Symms has a perfect voting record the eight years he has served in the House.

The two admitted they are paid by the committee which is made up of a board of directors of 36 members.

They described the organization as the "oldest and most successful anti-abortion political organization in the nation."

It was formed in early 1977, and it has been active in the 1978, 1979 and 1980 federal elections.

The Post-Register The political pulse

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Thursday, October 16, 1980 Section D

They said they raise money through contributions but did not disclose from what sources they come.

Cleve Corlett, press secretary for Church, however, said Church has voted 99 percent of the time to cut federal funds for abortion, saying it is a matter of public record.

"This is another group of Virginians (compared with the Anybody but Church organization also based in Virginia) coming into this state. They don't care about Idaho politics. It is an integral part of the Symms campaign to discredit Frank Church without the slightest regards to the facts or the truth."

The two hotly denied they are being paid by Symms but acknowledged they did inform Symms they were coming to Idaho. They said he offered no objections but if he had they would have not come.

They said they did not endorse candidates but they left no doubt they like Symms' record and not that of Church.

"We want to set the record straight," said Gemma, "in the way he talks pro-life in Idaho and votes for abortion funding in Washington."

"Basically," said Fiore, "we

want to show he is inconsistent."

Gemma said Church had made points on state rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution to transfer abortion decisions to the states but no such an amendment exists.

On the other hand, they said, Symms is now cosponsor of the Human Rights Amendment.

Fiore said, "We have not come to Idaho to tell Idahoans how to vote."

Corlett commented from Washington "Idahoans are fed up with these kind of tactics and they are going to show their displeasure on election day when they vote for Frank Church."

Corlett pointed out Church has been voting against abortion for years and passed the first law in 1973 to limit abortions, called "The Conscience Clause." It prevents the government from forcing Catholics and LDS hospitals or other religiously affiliated hospitals and clinics from opening facilities for abortions. It protects doctors and nurses from being coerced from performing abortions against their moral convictions or religious principles.

The pro-life group held similar press interviews in Boise and Pocatello.

The election eye . . .

Reagan arouses GOP Idaho victory spirit

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

If Idaho Republicans don't mark up sweeping general election victories, it won't be Ronald Reagan's fault.

The debonair Republican presidential contender fed the enthusiastic 5,000 spectators at the Bonneville High School Gym Tuesday afternoon what they wanted to hear, and they loved every minute.

A festive and victorious air prevailed in the cavernous gym and even Reagan became motivated; so much so, that he departed from his scheduled 15-minute talk and hammered on for 40 minutes.

He was nearly an hour late in speaking but that didn't deter him from taking full advantage of a highly partisan and cheering crowd.

Only a demonstrating handful of Equal Rights Amendment women lent a sour note but the women were peaceful in their determined effort to let Reagan know they were not especially pleased with the Republican platform which for the first time in years ignored ERA.

Everybody who was anybody in the Idaho Republican Party was on hand to taste what they felt is the fruit of victory. They all keyed in for Congressman Steve Symms and against Democratic Sen. Frank Church, but they also sounded calls for Republican victories on the presidential, congressional, legislative and local levels.

It was a Republican show of strength that bodes ill Nov. 4 for the Democrats, who already are fighting uphill battles.

All the Republican leaders were on hand, led by Sen. James A. McClure, and U.S. Reps. Symms and George Hansen.

On the state level were the feisty Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt, a self-acknowledged 1982 gubernatorial contender; Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa, Attorney General David Leroy, also looking at the governor's chair; and State School Supt. Jerry Evams. They are known in party circles affectionately as the "fearsome foursome" and give Democrat Gov. John V. Evans no end of political trouble.

Then, of course, there was the state chairman, Dennis M. Olsen, Idaho Falls attorney, who kept tight reins on a well run show, and the two top legislative leaders, Senate President Pro Tem Reed Budge, Soda Springs, and House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, Twin Falls.

Added to this imposing array were many East Idaho legislators and former legislators, such as former House Speaker Allan F. Larsen, Blackfoot, the 1978 gubernatorial nominee.

The state leaders, particularly Batt, cautioned against overlooking the important legislative races. There are no statewide contests this year, but he is aware the Democrats are a threat to wrest control of the

State Senate and closing the gap in the House. Batt pointed out the importance of Republican majorities in the reapportionment proposal based on the 1980 census to be considered in this session, likely a special session following the regular one.

Much credit for managing a well run event goes to Olsen and Ann Rydalch, the general chairman, but there were scores of others who helped. Only the rainy weather and the nearly hour delay by Reagan's arrival marred the event but they were minor compared to the accrued benefits.

The Democrats, of course, have no big gun to counter Reagan. They know full well appearance of President Jimmy Carter would not help, but rather would hinder, if the polls are any criterion.

The Reagan appearance, of course, was primarily to boost Symms, because Reagan's victory in Idaho, seems well assured. Also heavy favorites are the two congressional nominees, Rep. George V. Hansen, in the 2nd District, and State Sen. Larry Craig, Midvale, in the 1st District, although Craig's advantage is far more tenuous. But anyone at the giant rally would have been impressed by the smell of Republican victories.