

Ballots Tackle Abortion

Conditions for obtaining an abortion and the future status of Roe v. Wade could both be severely affected by the outcome this Tuesday of initiatives on three states' ballots.



[] Pro-life measures on the ballots of South Dakota, Colorado and California this Election Day could, depending on the state, either restrict or essentially ban abortion.

In California, if Proposition 4 passes Tuesday, it would limit but not ban abortion by requiring parental notification at least 48 hours before performing an abortion on a minor.

Colorado's Amendment 48 would officially define a fertilized human egg as a person.

By far the most ambitious measure exists in South Dakota, where during the 2006 midterm elections, a voter referendum killed the state legislature's nearly successful attempt at outlawing abortion permanently.

Now two years later, in one of three states nationwide where just one abortion clinic remains open for business, South Dakota voters have helped get Measure 11 on the ballot, which would ban all abortions in the state except for cases involving rape, incest or the mother's health.

"South Dakota's Measure 11 is about saving many babies from certain death," said Troy Newman, president of the pro-life group Operation Rescue. "The pro-life community must vote for legislation that would save 99.9 percent of children that would otherwise be killed."

Because presidential candidate John McCain has told pro-life voters he hopes to one day see Roe v. Wade overturned, the national elections have taken on a sense of urgency among pro-

life and pro-abortion advocates, who say the next president may appoint as many as two new justices to the Supreme Court.

"This is a historic election," Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life (AUL), told *USA Today*. "With the next president having the opportunity to appoint one, two or even more justices," she added, the election could change the law "on the life issue."

AUL seeks to incrementally advance a pro-life culture by advocating for pro-life laws. The group has endorsed California's Proposition 4, which helps to restrict abortion. The AUL Web site claims pro-life people are living today in "a promising environment."

"More pro-life laws are in effect than ever before and there is increasing public recognition of the negative impact of abortion on women," stated the site.

The Catholic Church, a longtime advocate for the rights of the unborn, is also very involved in addressing the abortion issue this election cycle.

According to the *Boston Globe*, more than 60 Catholic bishops nationwide have strongly urged voters to make abortion their top priority in an election dominated by the nation's economic turmoil, especially after hearing a handful of Catholic leaders endorse the staunchly pro-abortion presidential candidate Barak Obama.

Abortion is a crime "no less heinous than what was perpetrated by Hitler and Stalin," said New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan.

But *The Globe* also reported the emergence of a new debate among anti-abortionists. Various pro-life Catholic and Protestant intellectuals have recently begun advocating for a greater focus on preventing unwanted pregnancies rather than for devoting time and energy to legislative battles aimed at outlawing abortion.

Some of those leader, who claim the quality of the pro-life

message should include life inside and outside the womb, support Obama's candidacy.

In a speech earlier this month, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver lambasted Christians who appeared to be giving up.

"People who claim that the abortion struggle is lost as a matter of law, or that supporting an outspoken defender of legal abortion is somehow pro-life, are not just wrong; they're betraying the witness of every person who continues the work of defending the unborn child," he said, according to *The Globe*.