

Fight to Overturn Abortion Continues

Pro-life advocates redirected their efforts after the Supreme Court refused to reopen Roe v. Wade

Christian activists are refocusing their efforts to overturn abortion after the Supreme Court's recent refusal to revisit Roe v. Wade, which legalized the practice in all 50 states.

Attorneys for Norma McCorvey, "Jane Doe" in the 1973 lawsuit, have now set their sights on reversing the case of Sandra Cano, "Mary Doe" in the companion Doe v. Bolton lawsuit. Roe is better known because it legalized abortion, though only through the second trimester. Doe extended abortion access up to birth. Lawyers expect it to take two years to get Doe before the Supreme Court.

Both pro-life advocates today, McCorvey and Cano hope the decisions in their cases will be reversed based on more than 5,300 pages of evidence citing that abortion harms women. The appeals also include sworn testimony from more than 1,000 women who say they were hurt by abortion.

"That's the heart of it," said Allan Parker, lead attorney on both cases and president of the Justice Foundation, a nonprofit San Antonio-based law firm. "You cannot take the life of your own child without it producing severe psychological and emotional trauma."

The foundation filed a petition for writ of certiorari on Jan. 14, asking the Supreme Court to hear the Roe v. Wade case based on a federal rule that allows an original party to

request a ruling be vacated when factual and legal changes deem the decision no longer just. The Court refused without explanation on Feb. 22. "We're saddened greatly that they didn't listen to the women that they purport to protect," Parker said, "but we will not give up."

Previous attempts to reopen both cases have been unsuccessful. However, observers say that with four of the nine Supreme Court justices believed to oppose abortion, the appointment of a pro-life justice during President Bush's second term could tip the scales in favor of reversing the 1973 decision. "Reversing Roe v. Wade would mean that women would no longer suffer the trauma of abortion," said McCorvey, who now regrets her role in legalizing abortion.

McCorvey was 21 years old and pregnant for the third time when she signed on for the case. After the ruling, McCorvey strongly advocated abortion even working at an abortion clinic until an unlikely friendship changed her mind, and her heart. "I came to the Lord through the wisdom of a 7-year-old child," she said.

Through that child's persistence, a hardened McCorvey finally attended church. It was a day that changed her life forever. In 1995, McCorvey was baptized; today, she calls herself "100 percent pro-life, no exceptions."

Before the ruling was handed down, McCorvey gave birth to a girl, who was adopted. "I never had an abortion, so I can honestly say when [Roe v. Wade] is overturned, then my job is done."

Similarly, Cano never had an abortion and claims she never

sought one. "I was nothing but a symbol in Doe v. Bolton with my experience and circumstances discounted and misrepresented," she said in a sworn affidavit.

Cano claims she simply wanted a divorce and help regaining custody of her two children when she met the attorney working on Doe v. Bolton. Pregnant at the time with her fourth child, she said she thought she was signing divorce papers when she was actually signing a lawsuit against the state of Georgia for refusing her an abortion. "I never sought an abortion there or anywhere else," Cano claims.

Though she gave her baby up for adoption, Cano said she knows what it's like to feel responsible for an abortion. "I have been forced to live with the consequences of this false compassion for too long for me not to bring to the attention of the Court the fact that abortion is not in a woman's interest, and the fact that legalization of abortion began with manipulations and misrepresentations," she said.

"Abortion trauma and grief is real," said Joyce Zounis, director of women's outreach for Operation Outcry: Silent No More, a movement encouraging women to speak out about how abortion affected them. "Just like driving through McDonald's for a hamburger, I thought this was my quick fix," said Zounis, who had her first of seven abortions at age 15. "No one told me that there are possible physical or psychological complications."

Arlene Campbell testified that her uterus was perforated during her only abortion, resulting in an emergency hysterectomy at the age of 22. "Having to be told that I had a complete hysterectomy caused self-hatred, shame, years of rejection. It just tore my life apart," she said.

Today, at the age of 53, Campbell has no children, yet she wants women “to know that there is forgiveness and healing in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“If this is supposed to be protecting women, it’s not working,” said Theresa Burke, Ph.D, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries, a program whose goal is to help bring healing to post-abortive women and their families. “It forces [them] to live with the reality and the psychological impact of taking a human life.”

Burke submitted a 250-page expert witness affidavit to the court. “We should be able to find nonviolent alternatives that don’t invade a woman’s physical and psychological integrity,” she added.

For Alveda King, niece of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., the battle to overturn Roe is a personal one. She had two abortions and says today, “If there had been no Roe v. Wade, I would have never on my own had an abortion, ever.”

King said she will carry on her uncle’s legacy by speaking for all children. “How can the dream survive if we murder the children?” she asked. “None of us are winning as long as we are killing.”

Overturning either abortion decision will be a monumental challenge. A November Associated Press poll found that 61 percent of Americans say President Bush should nominate Supreme Court justices who would uphold Roe v. Wade, though 34 percent said he should nominate a justice who would overturn

it. Parker said there is only one reason those figures do not intimidate. "It will be God that breaks through the stronghold of abortion," he said.

Some of Parker's strongest opposition comes from Christians, such as the Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, president of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, who says there is no basis for the appeal. "If they say it causes serious psychological damage, what does that mean?" Veazey asked. "We've learned now that having a bypass operation causes depression. But people don't stop having bypasses because of that."

What Veazey calls a choice, Parker calls sin. "How can the God that gives us life, who says that every child is a blessing, want to allow us to kill them? It is contrary to God's nature," Parker said. "I'm not a theologian, I just know God."

Suzy Richardson