

Rally Targets Emerging Generation of Pro-Lifers

✖ A new generation of pro-life activists is rallying Tuesday in Southern California to “build a culture of life” during President Obama’s pro-choice administration.

Hosted by Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust, an organization that mobilizes pro-life youth activism, the Southern California Rally for Life beings at 7 p.m. at New Beginnings Community Church in Norco, Calif., and is part of Survivors’ weeklong training camp for young pro-lifers.

“The Survivors are taking an active stand on behalf of those who have already been lost, and for those who are scheduled to die through abortion,” the group said on its Web site. “We are empowered by the truth, enabled by extensive training, and unafraid of condemning the death of innocents.”

The California-based organization considers those born after Roe v. Wade legalized abortion in 1973 “survivors.”

The Tuesday rally will feature the Rev. Patrick Mahoney, president of the Christian Defense Coalition, along with Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue, and Walter B. Hoyer II, a pastor who spent 19 days in jail after picketing an Oakland, Calif., abortion clinic.

Earlier on Tuesday, the roughly 65 young activists were to gather outside California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s office to demand that taxpayer funds not be used for abortions at a time when the state faces severe budget shortfalls. The

protest was to kick off Survivors' national "Teachers Not Abortions" campaign.

"I've never been more optimistic about ending abortion than today, and that's because of the passion of this emerging generation," Mahoney said. "Every survey shows that the youth of America are embracing the culture of life."

Pro-life leaders say youth are likely one reason a May Gallup Poll found that 51 percent of Americans consider themselves pro-life. "That boost we got in the Gallup Poll really is from the youth," said Hoyer, founder of Issues4Life.

"The youth don't have any problem wrestling with the truth. ... They like to look at the data for themselves and make up their minds, and the truth about abortion is overwhelmingly pro-life."

Hoyer, who also will speak at the rally Tuesday, spent 19 days in jail for violating an Oakland, Calif., ordinance that prohibited him from standing on a sidewalk outside an abortion clinic with a sign that read, "Jesus loves you and your baby, let us help you."

On Friday, Hoyer and his attorneys were in court challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance, which bars picketers from coming within 8 feet of women entering an abortion clinic.

In late July, he is scheduled to appear before Alameda County Superior Court Judge Stuart Hing, who will decide whether to prohibit Hoyer from going within 100 yards of an abortion clinic. Hoyer accepted jail time instead of probation because it included the stay-away order.

At the rally Tuesday, Hoyer said he plans to explain the six principles of nonviolent social change laid down by Martin Luther King Jr., and challenge the youth to count the cost of

their pro-life activism.

Mahoney said youth are passionate about pro-life activism, but have their own methods for spreading their message.

"It's important for them to find their own creative ways to deal with [abortion], and we don't put our strategies or our tactics that we did 30 years ago on them," Mahoney said. "This emerging generation is much more into conversation, is much more into dialogue, obviously communicating through the Internet and taking a less direct approach but still as passionate approach."

Presley Crowe, a 17-year-old high school student from Santa Rosa, Calif., learned about the pro-life training camp through Facebook. She said her pro-life activism began about two years ago, and her motivation was deeply personal. She said her older sister is a product of date rape and she has two adopted siblings from China, one of whom is missing a leg and has some hand deformities.

"A lot of the pro-choice argument are people who would be born with disabilities or are from these situations don't deserve to live, so seeing these arguments kind of motivated me even more to get involved," she said.

Although her generation has never known life without abortion, Crowe believes Roe v. Wade could be overturned one day. "If you had asked me a year or two ago, I probably would have said there's no way anyone in my generation would support [overturning Roe v. Wade]," she said.

"But as I'm getting older, I realize that a lot of people around my age, they say they're pro-abortion but when you give them the facts and statistics and really inform them on things, they understand what it is and they see that it's murder. I think if we got more information out there, my generation would support overturning Roe V. Wade."

Amaris Gonzalez, 17, said she first saw graphic photos of abortion through her Christian school. "It made me really disgusted," she said. "So ever since then I've been really on fire about [the pro-life movement]."

Gonzalez said she's been inspired to ramp up her own activism, particularly by educating her peers about abortion. "Of course, our goal as always is to change the laws," she said. "But the way we're trying to do that is informing people little by little. So we're saving babies, but we're also informing people who are not necessarily pregnant so they can vote against [abortion]."

Even though the president is pro-choice, Gonzalez said Obama's abortion talk has helped heighten her generation's awareness of the issue.

"I think since Obama has become president, a lot of people are examining the issue on abortion," she said. "And I've actually noticed that a lot of my friends are switching to the pro-life side. ... He's definitely brought it to people's attention even more."