



January 13, 2000

State RTL

Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the hard work and commitment you have made to the protection of the unborn. As you know, there are approximately 1.5 million abortions performed in this country every year. This staggering number is a sobering lesson in the destructiveness of placing a relative value on human life. I share your belief in the sanctity of all human life, including the most vulnerable, that of the unborn child.

Despite my 17 year record of support for the pro-life position, I have come under increasing attack from the National Right to Life Washington office. In recent months, these attacks have taken on a distinctly personal nature that is unique, even in this unfortunate time of attack politics. What is even more disturbing than the personal tone of these attacks is the apparent motivation for them.

As I have said, I have a strong, and well documented pro-life voting record in Congress. Yet, I have incurred the wrath of the Washington office of National Right to Life on the completely unrelated issue of campaign finance reform. During previous campaign finance reform debates, the National Right to Life Washington office was severely critical of proposed restrictions on issue advocacy ads. *In order to address this concern, the legislation that I brought to the floor this year had no such restrictions on issue advocacy advertisements.* The legislation simply banned soft money, unregulated large dollar campaign contributions made by corporations, labor unions and wealthy individuals to political parties.

A ban on soft money would have absolutely no impact on the activities of National Right to Life, or its affiliates around the country. Yet, the Washington office of National Right to Life joined the likes of the American Civil Liberties Union in aggressively lobbying against the bill, helping to thwart my efforts to eliminate the corrupting influence of soft money over the political process.

During the recent Arizona Republican Presidential Candidate's debate I was very pleased to have Gary Bauer, former Reagan administration official, and head of the Family Research Counsel, join me in support of my effort to ban soft money. Gary continues to be one of the great champions of family values and the pro-life cause. He

www.mccain2000.com

735 N. St. Asaph Street • Alexandria, VA 22314
703-837-2000 • 703-837-2001 Fax • 877-905-7700 Toll Free
Paid for by McCain 2000, Inc.

spoke eloquently on the subversion of democracy by the corrupting influence of soft money, and expressed his support for the soft money ban I have been working to achieve

Gary said: "It is one thing for somebody to donate \$1,000 to one of us, which is the federal limit, but when a corporation or union can write a \$1 million or a \$2 million or a \$5 million check to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party, we all know that buys access that no average American can meet. And so I will support your effort to fairly have campaign finance reform that gets at the special interests in both parties. I think we need it."

I am convinced that the flood of soft money into the coffers of both parties has led to a corrupt system of government that is increasingly out of touch with the priorities and beliefs of the average American. This disconnect is painfully evident on the issue of abortion. A May 5, 1999, USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll found that 71 percent of Americans support some or total restrictions on abortion. Yet, this Congress has been unable to succeed even in passing a partial birth abortion ban by numbers sufficient to overcome President Clinton's veto. More disturbing, an October 21, 1999 Washington Post article titled "Anti-abortion Efforts Wane as House Sentiment Shifts," discusses the effort of GOP leaders to "de-emphasize" the abortion question.

I have consistently advocated for the reversal of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. I recently sent a letter to the leadership of the National Right to Life organization (see attached) in order to clarify my opposition to abortion. I have consistently supported amendments and legislation targeted at reducing the number of abortions in this country

Yet, I find myself subjected to a relentless attack from the National Right to Life Washington office. As a pro-life Senator I am deeply concerned that the Washington office of National Right to Life is squandering valuable time and resources opposing my efforts to eliminate the corrupting influence of soft money while the fight for the sanctity of life is being lost in Congress. By expending pro-life resources, not on the fight for life, but in attacking me personally and opposing a soft money ban, I fear the Washington office of National Right to Life is doing double harm to the pro-life movement.

First, as outlined in the Washington Post article I cited above (see attached), the influence of soft money is undermining the ability of the pro-life movement to be heard in Washington. The fight for life is a battle for the humanity of America. These objectives are not likely to be found on the legislative shopping lists of the big corporations and labor unions who purchase influence in Washington with tens-of-millions of dollars in soft money. A soft money ban will ensure that the pro-life voice will be heard in Washington.

Second, the drain of precious time, energy, and financial resources away from the legislative fight to end abortion weakens the ability of those committed to the pro-life movement to be effective. As you know all too well, resources are scarce, and time is of the essence. For every dollar wasted, and minute spent on issues unrelated to the pro-life cause the tragic costs are measured in very human terms.

Sadly, the National Right to Life Washington office has once again chosen to expend valuable pro-life resources attacking me, *in spite* of my 17 year pro-life record. On January 10, 2000, the National Right to Life Washington office began spending pro-life money to run attack ads against me in South Carolina. I have attached a copy of the pro-life votes that I have cast during my 17 years in Congress. The leading candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination are aggressively courting the pro-abortion vote. The Democrats are on the verge of regaining control of the House of Representatives. These facts represent a fundamental threat to the pro-life movement. Yet, the Washington office of National Right to Life is dedicating their energies, not to turning back this pro-abortion insurgency, but to attacking me - a pro-life Senator.

I share your goal of ending the practice of abortion in America. I believe that we must develop a comprehensive and well-defined strategy to achieve that goal. The first order of business is to reduce the staggering number of abortions performed every year, to save lives. We must engage in a national discussion about abortion, and the sanctity of life. We must work together with women who are struggling with the tragic choice of abortion, helping them to solve the human and spiritual problems that have lead them to the painful decision to have an abortion. If a woman is considering abortion because she is living in an abusive environment, we must provide her shelter and hope for the future. If a woman is considering abortion because she does not have a job, cannot afford healthcare or daycare, we must help her find a job, ensure her access to affordable healthcare and day care. We must help her develop the means and ability to care for herself and her child. We must ensure that adoption is accessible, and affordable. These are solvable problems. With life hanging in the balance we must do everything possible to address them.

However, we cannot rely on government to address these concerns. At its core, abortion is a human tragedy. If we are to affect meaningful change, we must engage the debate at a human level. To build the consensus necessary to end abortion we must turn to faith-based, community and neighborhood organizations like pro-life crisis pregnancy centers, church counseling programs, and not-for-profit community development organizations. We must build a local infrastructure of support to serve as a safety net for distressed mothers and their unborn children. We must engage our fellow citizens in a dialogue on the sanctity of life and the dignity of every human life. By engaging one-another at the community level, working together to solve the problems of our fellow man, we will save the lives threatened by the 1.5 million abortions performed in this country every year. In the process we will have initiated the dialogue critical to building the consensus and momentum necessary to end this human tragedy. We will also have begun to restore the tattered fabric of our culture and to rebuild the foundations of our humanity.

There are no unwanted children in America. Each one is precious beyond measure. We must preserve the sanctity and the dignity of life at every stage, from conception to natural passing. It is the very foundation on which our great nation is built. It goes to the core of our humanity.

I ask you to consider my pro-life voting record, my plan for engaging America in a strategy for ending abortion, my letter to National Right to Life reaffirming my commitment to reversing *Roe v. Wade*, and the fact that the issue advocacy restrictions are not included my campaign finance reform legislation. I hope that a fair reading of the facts will reassure you of my commitment to life from conception to natural passing, and that we can continue to work together to engage the American people in a very human and meaningful dialogue aimed at ending abortion.

Sincerely,


John McCain

JSM/dc

Encl.