



Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) - a bad and harmful law

January 2009

My Dear People,

I wish to share my concerns about legislation in the Congress of the United States entitled the Freedom of Choice Act or FOCA. This law if passed will be the most radical abortion legislation in the history of our country. In allowing and promoting abortion, FOCA goes far beyond the Supreme Court's deadly decision in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

FOCA states that every woman has a "fundamental right" to have an abortion and no government (federal, state, or local) may "deny" or "interfere with" this so called right. Moreover, no government may "discriminate" against the exercise of this right when regulating or providing "benefits, facilities, services, or information" to the public. In other words, abortion may not be treated differently from live birth.

FOCA will invalidate laws to protect a woman from unsafe abortion clinics and to ensure that she is informed about abortion. FOCA will require taxpayers to pay for abortions. FOCA will require states to allow "partial-birth" and other late-term abortions. FOCA will bar laws protecting a right of conscientious objection to abortion. Doctors, nurses, medical personnel and hospitals may be forced to perform abortions against their personally held moral principles. Finally FOCA will deny parents an opportunity to be involved in their minor daughter's abortion decision in those states that have such laws.

I believe it is incumbent on all of us who are Catholic citizens to let our representatives know of our concerns about FOCA so that a bad and harmful law will not be passed. You can sign a postcard, write a thoughtful letter, make a phone call, send an e-mail, meet with your Representatives and Senators' staff so that the dangerous extremes in this law might be eliminated.

As Catholic citizens we must speak and act for the common good. Allowing such a law to be enacted would open the doors wide to a greater number of abortions in our country, threaten the rights of conscience for medical personnel, and divide our country further on this issue. I believe all Americans want to see fewer abortions in our country. FOCA would have the opposite result.

We as a country should and must rather give support to all women who are pregnant and in need of help so that abortion will not be seen to be the only solution to a difficult personal problem. Taking the life of another human being is never a solution to any problem.

As the new Administration and the new Congress begin their work, we must let our voices be heard so that the common good will be realized for the good of all our citizens and people throughout the world.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh
Bishop of Santa Rosa