

KAREN MULHAUSER

Dear Friend,

When I was a little girl my mother read me the story about the shepherd who cried "Wolf! Wolf!" No doubt you remember that story too.

No one came to the little boy's aid. His sheep were eaten by the wolf because he had falsely cried "Wolf! Wolf!" too many times before. No one took him seriously when the real danger appeared.

That childhood story left a heavy impression on me. Its moral is never to cry out in false alarm. That's why I thought a long time before deciding now is the time to cry out -- now the real danger is here among us.

Quietly, but rapidly, our individual liberties are being threatened ... our religious system is threatened and our legal and constitutional framework is in jeopardy.

Fear and intimidation race through our political structures as rarely before in our history. This threat does not come from overseas or from economic difficulties, but from the zeal of some of our fellow citizens -- a small number of dogmatic religious leaders and ultra-conservative politicians -- acting in close cooperation to impose government control over our lives.

This religious-political coalition threatens to tear away the historic boundary between church and state. And with shocking speed they are now within reach of their goal -- control of our nation's political process.

Even more alarming is the fact that legal and religious control is part of their plan for our lives. Constitutional scholars, bishops and rabbis are worried. So am I, and so are thousands upon thousands of your fellow citizens.

I hope you too are worried -- worried enough to do something about it.

A few years ago many people laughed at the "right to life" movement, then watched it grow. The Moral Majority also initially seemed foolish to many of us. So did many of those candidates for the U.S. Senate who talked as though they lived in a bygone century.

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National Abortion Rights Action League

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But on November 4th, 1980, the warning signs could no longer be ignored. Most people stopped laughing. Distinguished public servants like former U.S. Senators George McGovern (D-SD), Birch Bayh (D-IN), John Culver (D-IA), Jacob Javits (R-NY) and many others went down to defeat at the hands of the New Right.

It has become clear that a key issue in the momentous struggle which will determine the fate of many basic rights and liberties is the issue of free choice and abortion. That's why I'm writing you today on behalf of the National Abortion Rights Action League and why I seek your wholehearted support.

The warning signs are ominous.

- Senate hearings on a bill defining "when life begins" recently ended. Known as the Hyde/Helms bill, it is a blatant attempt to outlaw abortion by overturning the 1973 Supreme Court abortion decision. The right wing intends to ram this bill or a Constitutional Amendment banning all abortions through this Congress.
- Early this year, the far right cut out federal funding for abortions for poor women, even those who are victims of rape and incest!
- In the Senate, a coalition of New Right and Moral Majoritarians pushed through the Labor and Human Resources Committee a "teenage pregnancy bill," which bars counseling centers from even suggesting abortion as a possible option.

What's more, powerful anti-choice groups like the Life Amendment Political Action Committee and the National Conservative Political Action Committee -- their appetites whetted by last November's victories -- have drawn up and announced their "hit lists" for next year's elections!

Our best friends have been targeted.

"Malignant" may be too strong a word to describe the nature of this new religious/right-wing political coalition. But I'd rather describe it harshly than dismiss it lightly. For beneath their veneer of moralistic certainty and dogmatic self-righteousness lurks the potential for destruction of our political, religious and legal institutions.

What lies beneath this self-righteous crusade to outlaw abortion and ban contraceptives is prejudice against the free exercise of individual freedom by each and every American. The irony is that they say they are working to keep the government out of our lives.

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key states. But to be as effective as we will have to be to defeat the threat of both the Hyde/Helms bill and the Constitutional Amendment, we urgently need your help.

The National Abortion Rights Action League is the largest organization devoted exclusively to defending the right to choose an abortion.

When you join NARAL, you join more than 115,000 of your fellow Americans who have decided that now is the time to take a stand. The dues and contributions of our members pay for house meetings and organizing efforts in local neighborhoods ... for support of political skills training and outreach campaigns ... for testimony and lobbying in Congress and key state capitals ... for training the thousands and thousands of volunteer activists who will be needed to stem the anti-abortion tide ... and for a national media campaign aimed at activating the pro-choice majority.

Right now, those who seek to impose their beliefs on you and me are mobilizing at the grass roots level. They smell victory and they're not leaving anything to chance. Neither can we.

The day anti-abortion legislation passes Congress will be a sad day indeed. But, you can keep it from becoming a tragic day by helping to put in place the defenses which will be necessary to block this reactionary legislation in the states.

Please don't think for a moment that I am crying "Wolf!" And please don't put this letter aside thinking that someone else will help and you don't have to. The stakes are simply too high to leave it to the other person.

Please join us today.

Sincerely,

Karen Mulhauser

Karen Mulhauser
Executive Director

P.S. As soon as your urgently needed membership contribution arrives, we see to it that you receive the NARAL newsletter and timely bulletins keeping you informed of this historic battle. You'll also learn how you can directly participate in helping your state reject these dogmatic efforts to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court ruling and to rewrite our Constitution and curtail your freedom.

I'm writing to enlist your help because even though public opinion polls show that four out of every five Americans reject the goals and philosophy of the Evangelical Right, this "silent majority" is still frighteningly indifferent to the threat. You and I and all others concerned with freedom must launch a campaign to wake up the silent majority before it's too late.

If you think I'm unduly alarmed, let me outline just how far this crusade to manage our lives has come . . .

- ... For the first time in history, we have a President committed to the Constitutional Amendment and the Hyde/Helms "when life begins" statute, both of which would outlaw abortion.
- ... Even more threatening is the fact that as a result of the 1980 elections, key committees in the U.S. Senate now are led by anti-abortion Senators. Men like Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Strom Thurmond (R-SC), and John East (R-NC).
- ... Add to this the intense pressure from the Moral Majority, the anti-abortion movement and numerous Far Right political action committees which are demanding to be paid their political debts, and you see why we face a grave crisis for individual choice and basic freedoms.

When the Constitutional Amendment banning abortion passes Congress, the only line of defense which will remain is the state legislatures.

Analysis of earlier votes in the states calling for a Constitutional Convention and our analysis of the voting patterns in November, 1980 lead us to believe that at least nineteen states will ratify the anti-abortion amendment immediately.

Since only thirty-eight states are needed to ratify a Constitutional Amendment, that leaves only nineteen states standing between individual freedom and the anti-abortion amendment.

To preserve our own freedoms and our Constitution from this restriction of human liberty, we must mobilize the more than 80% of America which opposes an amendment prohibiting abortion. And we must mobilize that majority quickly.

Right now NARAL's field organizers and staff are hard at work expanding pro-choice groups in state after state. They're laying the groundwork for new coalitions and new organizing efforts in

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