

Citizen silence on abortion untenable

Utahns may be startled to learn that "a silent majority" among them is "pro-choice" regarding abortion. Unitarian minister Tom Goldsmith, speaking at the Nov. 12 abortion rights protest at the state Capitol, assured the pro-abortion crowd that "The majority is us."

It takes a great deal of audacity for a group of 400 to proclaim itself a majority. Such audacity is, however, not without precedent. Lenin's tiny cadre, which imposed communist rule upon a country spanning 11 time zones, called itself the "Majority-ites" (the English translation of the term "Bolsheviks"). The Utah pro-abortion faction is attempting a similar rhetorical coup, and it has a decent chance to succeed.

Abortion is a manifestly unpleasant topic and Utah has a strong cultural aversion to unpleasantness. There is a formidable consensus in Utah against abortion, but it is (with apologies to Rev. Goldsmith) a largely silent consensus. Now that the states have been given more power to regulate abortion, such silence is untenable.

A recent mini-controversy at BYU illustrates the dangers of a silent consensus. The Young Americans, a campus political organization, invited Rosa Goodnight of Right To Life Of Utah to speak on campus. Mrs. Goodnight was denied approval to speak to the campus at large, although the Young Americans may have her address their club.

A spokesman for BYU expressed the University's concern that approval of a pro-life speaker would require the invitation of a spokesman from the other side to provide balance. "The (college) has taken a clear stand (on abortion) and we don't want to open the campus to a debate on the issue."

The implication is that the position of BYU and its sponsoring institution is unassailably clear. Is it?

During an earlier abortion-rights protest at the capitol this fall, a small group was seen brandishing a sign reading, "BYU Students For Pro-Choice" (sic). The sign contained an official BYU logo, although the group had not been authorized to use it.



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**FOR THE
SAKE OF
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One of the students explained that the group at the protest represented "A large number of students" on campus at BYU. If this is true — if it is not another presumptuous claim — there is a significant segment of the student population that has contrived some "wiggle room" on the abortion issue.

Rather than avoiding a debate on the issue, BYU should encourage it. The absence of robust, public debate is apparently cultivating the impression that the "Pro-Choice" position harmonizes with that of the University and its sponsoring institution. Besides, a healthy debate will expose the utter vacuity of the "pro-choice" arguments.

Debora Threedy of the University of Utah law school, a speaker at the Nov. 12 abortion rally, declared that "The issue is not whether abortion is right or wrong, but who gets to decide." This is a fascinating legal principle: an act isn't wrong if the person committing it believes it to be right. To what other acts does Threedy propose to extend this reasoning?

The "pro-choice" movement conducts its assault on the unborn protected by a dense fog of double-speak. Susanne Millsaps, another speaker at the abortion rally proclaimed, "We can stop the anti-choice, mandatory-pregnancy forces in our country." It was Orwell who pointed out that the great enemy of clear language is insincerity. Millsaps' declaration is as insincere as it is opaque.

The primary victim of abortion, the unborn child, is also a victim of bigotry — the bigotry of indifference. Such indifference produces the congealed rhetoric of the "Pro-Choice" movement. But that indifference is also abetted by a silent pro-life consensus.