

Pro-Life Advantage Carried Tight Races

BY Karen Cross

Two overviews of the general elections in the November NRL News highlighted how many pro-life candidates prevailed even though enormous forces, unrelated to the pro-life issues, had threatened to capsize their election bids. Further evaluation and polling conclusively demonstrated that the pro-life advantage on the abortion issue saved at least 18 candidates for the House of Representatives and one Senate seat.

The math is as straightforward as it is stark.

Nationwide National Right to Life's Political Action Committee was involved in 87 races. Thanks to the support of pro-lifers, it was victorious in 53% of the contests.

However, these numbers alone do not do justice to the importance of the advantage pro-life candidates enjoyed over their opponents on the abortion issue.

Among voters who consider abortion when voting, post-election polling revealed a nearly two-to-one advantage for pro-life candidates over pro-abortion candidates.

As noted above, 53% of NRL PAC-supported House candidates won. Of those, 18 pro-life candidates won their races by 3% or fewer.

In other words these 18 pro-life House candidates, along with Senator-elect Bob Corker of Tennessee, will serve in office because of the dedication and commitment of pro-life volunteers nationwide.

There is a second way of gauging the impact of abortion in deciding the November 7 outcomes.

In this election cycle the dominant pro-abortion political action group was EMILY's List, which backs only candidates who support abortion on demand, partial-birth abortion, and tax funding of abortion. EMILY's List raised more than \$30 million (probably much more!) for the 2006 elections. This was about 10 times more than the resources of NRL PAC.

National Right to Life PAC went head-to-head with EMILY's List in 18 House races. The candidates supported by NRL PAC won 14 of the 18. Moreover, nine of those 14 victorious pro-life candidates won by margins of 3% or fewer.

Below is a thumbnail sketch of those contests.

California 4—Congressman John Doolittle (R) triumphed over pro-abortion candidate Charles Brown (D), 49% to 46%. Congressman Doolittle has a 100% pro-life voting record.

Colorado 4—Pro-life Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave (R) defeated challenger state Rep. Angie Paccione (D), who was endorsed by EMILY's List, 46% to 43%.

Florida 13—This is an open-seat contest between pro-life candidate Vern Buchanan (R) and EMILY's List-endorsed candidate Christine Jennings (D). As NRL News goes to print they are in the midst of a recount. Buchanan is leading by 373 votes out of about a quarter of a million cast—less than two-tenths of one percent.

Illinois 6—The seat being vacated by pro-life champion Congressman Henry Hyde (R) received national attention. Pro-life candidate Peter Roskam (R) defeated Tammy Duckworth (D), 51% to 49%. Duckworth was endorsed by EMILY's List and NARAL, another pro-abortion political action committee which supports candidates who support unrestricted abortion on demand, partial-birth abortion, and tax funding of abortion.

Nevada 3—Congressman Jon Porter (R) squeaked by Tessa Hafen (D), 48% to 47%. Hafen was Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's former spokeswoman and was handpicked by Reid as the candidate.

New Jersey 7—Pro-life Congressman Mike Ferguson (R) fended off a challenge by Linda Stender (D), 49% to 48%. Assemblywoman Stender was endorsed by EMILY's List, NARAL, and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund (Planned Parenthood's political arm). Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in the United States.

New Mexico 1—Congresswoman Heather Wilson (R) survived a recount against State Attorney General Patricia Madrid (D). Madrid was endorsed by EMILY's List and NARAL, and accepted \$2,000 in campaign contributions from the Planned Parenthood Action Fund. Wilson won by a scant 862 votes.

New York 25—Pro-life Congressman Jim Walsh (R) overcame a stiff test from pro-abortion challenger Dan Maffei (D), a NARAL-endorsed candidate, 51% to 49%. Also in New York, Congressmen Tom Reynolds (R) and Randy Kuhl (R) overcame challenges from pro-abortion candidates.

North Carolina 8—Pro-life Congressman Robin Hayes (R) won by less than 1% over his pro-abortion opponent Larry Kissel (D).

Ohio 2—Pro-life Congresswoman Jean Schmidt (R) won a nail-biter against EMILY's List candidate Victoria Wulsin, M.D. (D) by a mere 2,517 votes.

Pennsylvania 6—Pro-abortion candidate Lois Murphy (D), who was endorsed by EMILY's List and accepted \$10,000 in campaign contributions from NARAL, was unable to unseat Congressman Jim Gerlach (R). Gerlach won by less than 1%.

Tennessee Senate—Pro-life former Chattanooga Mayor Bob Corker (R) prevailed against pro-abortion Congressman Harold Ford, Jr. (D) in a hotly contested race, 51% to 48. Despite insisting that he was "pro-life," Ford was unable to hide from his strongly pro-abortion record—87%—over a ten-year period, due to the efforts of NRL PAC.

Virginia 2—Congresswoman Thelma Drake (R) survived a challenge by Virginia Beach Revenue Commissioner Phil Kellam (D) to win by 3%.

Washington 8—Pro-abortion candidate Darcy Burner (D) was unable to defeat pro-life Congressman Dave Reichert (R), despite endorsements by EMILY's List and NARAL, and a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Planned Parenthood Action Fund. Reichert carried his district by 2%.

Wyoming At-large—Congresswoman Barbara Cubin (R) overcame a stiff challenge from pro-abortion Gary Trauner (D). Cubin narrowly prevailed 48.3% to Trauner's 47.8%.

In all probability, without the support of pro-life volunteers nationwide, and the efforts of National Right to Life PAC, all these candidates would have lost.

In hotly contested races across the nation, the pro-life advantage was alive and well. Clearly, it pays to be pro-life.