

The Jamestown Sun

An Obama I can't believe in, yet

President Obama's Notre Dame speech on abortion was applauded by the mainstream media, quoting his call for more "open hearts, open minds, fair-minded words." But except for the pro-life, and some conservative forums, there was no mention of Obama's omission of his own documented, chilling record on abortion that proves what he also said on that Sunday: "No matter how much we want to fudge it ... the fact is that at some level, the views of the two camps are irreconcilable."

By: Nat Henthoff, First Amendment , The Jamestown Sun

President Obama's Notre Dame speech on abortion was applauded by the mainstream media, quoting his call for more "open hearts, open minds, fair-minded words." But except for the pro-life, and some conservative forums, there was no mention of Obama's omission of his own documented, chilling record on abortion that proves what he also said on that Sunday:

"No matter how much we want to fudge it ... the fact is that at some level, the views of the two camps are irreconcilable." I watched the full-scale coverage of the speech on Fox News; and the reporting, before and after, did not inform the viewers — as one glaring example — that when Obama was an Illinois state senator, he voted three times against a Born-Alive Infants Protection Act that required medical care for an infant, born alive human being, during a botched abortion.

When, during his Notre Dame speech, a protestor — before being removed — called Obama a "baby killer," he was making a literal point.

Obama has also clearly pledged a "litmus test" for his choices for the Supreme Court. In a July 17, 2007, speech to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, he stated: "With one more vacancy on the Supreme Court, we could be looking at a majority hostile to a woman's fundamental right to choose for the first time since Roe v. Wade. The next president may be asked to nominate that Supreme Court justice."

Is this what he means by the need for "open minds" in the debate on abortion?

At Notre Dame, Obama glided away from the truth when he said: "Let's honor the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause, and make sure that all of our health care policies are grounded in clear ethics and sound science, as well as respect for the equality of women."

Compare those seemingly "fair-minded words" with this Feb. 27, 2009, headline in the Washington Post: "Obama Administration to Rescind Bush's 'Conscience' Regulation." The accompanying story began:

"The Obama administration has begun the process of rescinding sweeping new federal protections that were granted in December to healthcare workers who refuse to provide care that violates their personal, moral or religious beliefs." How do you define "conscience," Mr. President?"

Also absent from Obama's Notre Dame address, when he paid honor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was what Jesse Jackson, a pro-lifer before deciding to run for president, called "black genocide." A credible source of abortion statistics, Guttmacher Institute, reported in "Abortion and Woman of Color: The Bigger Picture" by Susan Cohen, its director of government:

"In the United States, the abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 women of childbearing age) for black women is almost five times that of white women."

Three days after Obama was inaugurated, at the annual March for Life in Washington, Luke Robinson, a black pastor from Frederick, Maryland, said to our first black president:

“Please, Mr. President, be that agent of change that can commute the sentence of over 1,400 African American children and over 3,000 children from other ethnic groups, sentenced to die every day in this country by abortion.
...

“At the conclusion of your term in office, may it never be said that you presided over the largest slaughter of innocent children in the history of the country and that African Americans became an ever-increasing minority under your hand.”

To be fair to the president, he did say at Notre Dame, as he has often before: “So let us work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions. Let’s reduce unintended pregnancies. Let’s make adoption more available. Let’s provide care and support for women who do carry their children to term.”

There is just such a bill that has been introduced by two Democrats, Mr. President, in Congress: Lincoln Davis of Tennessee in the House and Robert P. Casey Jr. in the Senate. As reported in the valuable Catholic weekly “Our Sunday Visitor” (May 24, 2009):

“The Pregnant Women Support Act includes a number of provisions to help women faced with ... Establish a federally funded, toll-free hot line to direct women to services that can provide them with assistance during and after their pregnancy. Provide support, including education grants and child care, to parents who are teenagers or college students. ...

“Require institutions that offer abortions to provide accurate information to pregnant women about their options, including adoption, and the potential short-term and long-term complications associated with abortion.”

My column next week will provide more information about this measure, which should have been a law long ago. As of this writing, the offices of both Casey and Davis tell me there has been no word from the White House about supporting The Pregnant Women Support Act.

Mr. President, did you mean what you said at Notre Dame about “working together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions”?

Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights. He is a member of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and the Cato Institute, where he is a senior fellow.

Copyright 2009, Nat Hentoff.

Distributed by Newspaper Enterprise Assn.