

## **Minutes of Regular Meeting – April 26, 2007**

The fourth meeting of the board of the North Shore Chapter was held on April 26, 2007 at the Vernon Township Library in Lincolnshire, the Northbrook Public Library, our usual meeting place, being unavailable on that date.

The next meeting, scheduled for May 24th, will be at the Northbrook Library. The invited speakers: Rabbi Adam Chalom, Ph.D (Rabbi, Kol Hadash Humanistic Congregation; Associate Dean, International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism)

Jonathan Stack (Illinois Campaign for Responsible Sex Ed) being unavailable on April 26th, a well-prepared presentation was made by David Robin on the recent Supreme Court Decision: Gonzales v. Carhart - the Constitutionality of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003.

After reviewing the history of significant abortion cases, beginning with Roe v. Wade (1973), David continued with an explanation of partial-birth abortion procedures and the punitive effect of the new decision on physicians who would perform these procedures. No regard is to be given to health considerations of the women. The women are not to be prosecuted. David summarized the majority opinion by Justice Kennedy and the concurring opinions by Justices Thomas and Scalia, as well as the strongly dissenting opinion of Justice Ginsburg.

It appears that this decision by the Court, while facially constitutional, and not vague as in the previous Nebraska statute, is nonetheless poorly constructed (e.g. the Commerce Clause was not examined), disregards precedent, and employs (in David's words) "flimsy and transparent justifications". It seems to have been affected by political considerations favoring the Religious Right. Even concurring Justice Thomas remarked that "the Court's abortion jurisprudence has no basis in the Constitution".

The discussion that followed the presentation, while raising many questions about this decision, centered on the implications for broader use by states to try to further curtail abortion rights, and by the Religious Right who are expected to exploit the Court's language for many other issues of their agenda. It seems likely that the decision will be tested by "as-applied" and Commerce Clause challenges. The issue is not settled.

(NOTE: In the "New York Times" of 4/27/07, an editorial "Reflections on the New Abortion Ruling and the Roberts Court" severely criticized this Decision, making the same points that David Robin raised, and its use of "junk science", but also reviewed the history of Justice Kennedy's views as well as those of Justices Alito and Roberts).

Matt Lowry reviewed the successful outcome of the recent District 214 school board election in which the right-wing candidates were soundly defeated. He went on to summarize his efforts with the state General Assembly concerning the Senate-passed Moment of Silence Bill, his continuing telephone calls and his hope to follow up personally with Representative Currie, Majority Leader, (building upon his letter to her dated April 18th), and others when he is in Springfield next week for other business. He will try to get to meet House Speaker Madigan, who is believed to be the power center of the legislature.

Bob Wilson expressed the desirability of our knowing what is in the legislative hopper now, so we can prepare our activities and responses.

The national headquarters, congratulating us on forming a new chapter, sent a check for \$250.00 which will be deposited in the new bank account that Treasurer Bob Wilson established at CharterOne Bank in

Evanston. It will also permit him to be reimbursed for the \$100.00 he graciously advanced to open the account.

The need for financing was discussed briefly. Board members were encouraged to attend an activist training session to be held by the national office on Sunday, May 20th from 12:30-5:30 PM at the Wyndham Garden Chicago Hotel, 8201 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631, to learn how to fundraise as well as organize. It was agreed that fund-raising activity must commence after our tax-exempt status is finalized.

The need for publicizing Americans United, and our chapter in particular, was also discussed. Bob Wilson volunteered to pursue Air America (AM broadcast), Ethical Humanist Society and perhaps others. David Robin offered to contact "Common Ground" in Deerfield. Eileen Cooper offered to check with Pioneer Press. Matt Lowry suggested outreach to churches and synagogues, Interfaith Alliance and the Center for Inquiry, and will check with them.

Rabbi Chalom will speak at our May 24th meeting. He has long been active in issues of separation of church and state. Matt Lowry will try to get Jonathan Stack to speak at our June meeting on sex education, and will try to get Ed Wohnka of ACLU to speak to us at some future date.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul R. Cooper  
Secretary