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Brodhead predicts Federally paid abortions to end

By SHIRLEE IDEN

A Lathrup Village physician said recently that if federal funding is withdrawn for Medicaid abortions, he will perform them free of charge.

Rep. William Brodhead is of the opinion that may come to pass. In a Saturday morning interview in his Washington office, the congressman predicted federal monies for abortions will be terminated in the near future.

"My own feeling is that if abortion is going to be legal then it must be legal for all," he said. "We can't have one status for the rich and one for the poor. To say the sick, disabled and poor cannot have abortions is unfair."

Since the Supreme Court ruled in a decisive manner in 1974 that to outlaw abortions is unconstitutional, they are a legal medical procedure and can be obtained under Medicaid programs which are supported half by federal and half by state funds.

"Under Medicaid, people can go to a doctor or a hospital and get the care they need," he said. "Since the Supreme Court decision regarding abortions they are receiving them. Opponents say they don't want their tax dollars used for abortions."

Brodhead said there is no issue on which people feel so intensely as that of abortion.

"SOME FEEL that abortion is the taking of a human life and the government must stop it," he said. "I also hear from people that it's an individual decision that a woman has to make for herself and is often a good and humane thing."

"It's a moral and theological question whether it's taking a human life and I have neither the scientific nor the theological expertise to decide this. What I know is that at some point a fetus becomes a human life and deserves protection from the government."

"I do have an obligation to see that the Constitution is implemented and to me this means keeping the government out of moral and theological questions."

Brodhead said that at present, a woman has the right to terminate a pregnancy if she chooses and the state may not interfere.

"That's the law of the land and the only way to change it would be with a new decision by the Supreme Court and the court is not likely to overrule itself," he said.

"The other way would be to amend the Constitution either by a vote in the Congress and ratification by the states or by a constitutional convention to write an amendment." He explained the first method is the only one ever

used in the 26 amendments today attached to the Constitution.

"TRADITIONALLY, people resist the convention method because it might put the whole Constitution up for grabs," he said.

"The idea we could have a new Constitution is pretty scary. The advocates of a convention are saying they could limit it to abortion but who knows? They could decide to make changes in the Bill of Rights."

In answer to those who object to tax dollars being used for abortions, the House of Representatives has voted to limit those funds but the Senate has voted the other way, he said.

"So far, it's been a compromise."

Brodhead thinks the situation will deteriorate and the funds will be withdrawn, forcing some people to again go for illegal abortions.

"This sometimes entails very serious health problems under unsanitary and unprofessional conditions and I think it is a sad thing this may come to pass," he said. "Some people will have to come up with this money somehow and I hope not from crime."

The congressman pointed out that a high proportion of children born as a result of cutting off abortions will become wards of the state.

"From a financial standpoint, and I don't think it is one, you're trading a \$150 abortion for \$30,000 and up to support a child," he said. "But we can't look at it in this way. It's not a money problem, it's a moral one."



REP. WILLIAM BRODHEAD

Brodhead, who represents Southfield, Farmington and Redford in Congress, is well into his second term. Saturday interviews are not unusual in his 50 or more hour work week. He estimates that he averages one weekend out of two home in the 17th district and that 60 hours of work does not include the reading he takes home at night.

While issues such as abortion are complex and frustrating, Brodhead can point to another family issue on which he has obtained a clear victory—the area of adoption, particularly of the handicapped.

Early this year, Brodhead met Kathy Cavanaugh, wife of the former mayor of Detroit, at a conference and was alerted that a problem existed in the procedure for adopting children.

"Under existing law, if you adopt a child that was formerly your foster child, you no longer get a subsidy from the state or federal governments," he explained. "When you are dealing with hard-to-place children with special

medical or emotional problems this could deter or prevent adoption."

The legislation Brodhead sponsored as an amendment to a bill on social services and welfare programs provides for such subsidies to continue.

"These are children people hesitate to adopt in the first place because of extra costs of care," he said. "Foster parents get the funds for braces, wheelchairs and such and we had been cutting those funds on adoption."

"It's still in the Senate but it's moving around and I'm optimistic it will be adopted soon," he said.

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