

South Dakota officially bars most abortions



Gov. Mike Rounds signs a bill on Monday in Pierre, S.D., that bans nearly all abortions in South Dakota.

Challenge likely to bill making procedure illegal

By CHET BROKAW
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gov. Mike Rounds signed legislation Monday that would ban most abortions in South Dakota, a law he acknowledged would be tied up in court for years while the state challenges the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

The bill would make it a crime for doctors to perform an abortion

"Personally I think this court will be more interested in looking at different aspects of Roe v. Wade rather than the direct frontal assault ..."

Gov. Mike Rounds, R-S.D.
on how the courts will look at the abortion law

unless the procedure was necessary to save the woman's life. It would make no exception for cases of rape or incest.

Planned Parenthood, which operates the state's only abortion clinic, in Sioux Falls, immediately pledged to challenge the measure. The challenge could either be in court or by petition signatures to refer the measure to a statewide ballot in which voters would be

asked to repeal the abortion ban.

"We fully intend to challenge this law," said Kate Looby, state director of Planned Parenthood. "It's just a question of how."

The legislature passed the bill last month after supporters argued that the recent appointment of conservative justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito have made the U.S. Supreme Court more likely to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Rounds said he believes it would be better to chip away at abortion one step at a time rather than directly confront Roe v. Wade. But he said many abortion opponents want the direct challenge.

"Personally I think this court will be more interested in looking at different aspects of Roe v. Wade rather than the direct frontal assault, but we'll never know unless someone tries," Rounds said.

Rounds said he agrees with legislative sponsors that the test of a civilization is how it treats its most vulnerable and helpless people, and that unborn children are the most vulnerable and helpless.

Under the new law, doctors could get up to five years in prison for performing an illegal abortion. Abortion opponents already are

offering money to help the state pay legal bills for the anticipated court challenge, Rounds has said. Lawmakers said an anonymous donor has pledged \$1 million to defend the ban, and the Legislature set up a special account to accept donations for legal fees.

Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said her organization will urge people across the nation to fight for their reproductive freedom. Some other states are considering similar bans on abortion, and the South Dakota legislation will have an impact in other states, she said.

"We see that this is about more than just South Dakota. It's about the country," Keenan said. "The bottom line in all of it is elections matter."

THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

Homeland insecurity

Agency's guards claim they need more training

By LARRY MARGASAK
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

The agency entrusted with protecting the U.S. homeland is having difficulty safeguarding its own headquarters, say private security guards at the complex.

The guards have taken their concerns to Congress, describing inadequate training, failed security tests and slow or confused reactions to bomb and biological threats.

For instance, when an envelope with suspicious powder was opened in the fall at Homeland Security Department headquarters, guards said they watched in amazement as superiors carried it by the office of Secretary Michael Chertoff, took it outside and then shook it outside Chertoff's window without evacuating people nearby.

The scare, caused by white powder that proved to be harmless, "stands as one glaring example" of the agency's security problems, said Derrick Daniels, one of the first guards to respond to the incident.

"I had never previously been given training ... describing how to respond to a possible chemical attack," Daniels told The Associated Press. "I wouldn't feel safe nowhere on this compound as an officer."

Daniels was employed until last fall by Wackenhut Services Inc., the private security firm that guards Homeland's headquarters in a residential area of Washington. The company has been criticized previously for its work at nuclear facilities and transporting nuclear weapons.

Homeland Security officials say they have little control over Wackenhut's training of guards but plan to improve that with a new contract. The department said the suspicious powder incident was overblown because the mail had already been irradiated.

Daniels is among 14 current and former Wackenhut employees, mostly guards, who were interviewed by The Associated Press or submit-



Video image taken Feb. 22 shows former security guard Derrick Daniels outside the Department of Homeland Security in Washington. Daniels is among 14 guards who have launched complaints claiming that they lack necessary training to deal with bomb and biological threats.

ted written statements to Congress that were obtained by AP.

A litany of problems were listed by the guards, whose pay ranges from \$15.60 to \$23 an hour based on their position and level of security clearance. Among their examples of lax security:

- They have no training in responding to attacks with weapons of mass destruction.
- Chemical-sniffing dogs have been replaced with ineffective equipment that falsely indicates the presence of explosives.
- Vehicle entrances to Homeland Security's complex are lightly guarded.
- Guards with radios have trouble hearing each other, or have no radios, no batons and no pepper spray, leaving them with few options beyond lethal force with their handguns.

Wackenhut President Dave Foley disputed the allegations, saying officers have a minimum of one year's security experience, proper security clearances and training in vehicle screening,

identification of personnel, handling of suspicious items and emergency response.

Wackenhut is no stranger to criticism.

Over the past two years, the Energy Department inspector general concluded that Wackenhut guards had thwarted simulated terrorist attacks at a nuclear lab only after they were tipped off to the test; and that guards also had improperly handled the transport of nuclear and conventional weapons.

Homeland Security is based at a gated, former Navy campus in a college neighborhood — several miles from the heavily trafficked streets that house the FBI, Capitol, Treasury Department and White House.

Homeland Security spokesman Brian Doyle said Wackenhut guards are still operating under a contract signed with the Navy, and the agency has little control over their training. A soon-to-be-implemented replacement contract will impose new requirements on security guards, he said.



Iraqi President Jalal Talabani talks to the media in Baghdad, Iraq, on Saturday. The president could not order parliament into session by March 12.

Iraqi president fails to get parliament started

By BASSEM MROUE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Iraq's president lost in a bid Monday to order parliament into session by March 12, further delaying formation of a government and raising questions whether the political process can withstand the unrelenting violence or disintegrate into civil war.

The deadlock came as snipers

assassinated Maj. Gen. Mibder Hatim al-Dulaimi, the Sunni Arab in charge of Iraqi forces protecting the capital.

A torrent of bombings and shootings killed 25 more Iraqis on Monday, ending a relative lull in violence.

At the heart of the dispute is a controversy over the second-term candidacy of the Shiite prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, whose most powerful supporter is the anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The Sunni Arab minority blames al-Jaafari for failing to control the Shiite militiamen who attacked Sunni mosques and

clerics after the Feb. 22 shrine bombing in Samarra.

Kurds are angry because they believe al-Jaafari is holding up resolution of their claims to control the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

It remained unclear when parliament might convene, despite the constitutional directive that set Sunday as the deadline.

Nor was it clear how the disagreement over al-Jaafari might be settled.

Leaders of all Iraq's major political factions scheduled a meeting tonight in an attempt to untangle the religious and sectarian differences behind the crisis, deeply compounded by continuing violence.

Bush asks Congress for line-item veto power

President wants items to get an up-or-down vote

By ANDREW TAYLOR
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Seeking new power to weed hometown projects from legislation passed by Congress, President Bush on Monday asked lawmakers to give him a modified version of the line-item veto struck down by the Supreme Court eight years ago.

Like presidents dating back to Ulysses S. Grant, Bush wants the power to strike individual items from a bill without having to veto the entire measure.

President Clinton got that wish in 1996, when the Republican majority in the House pushed through a line-item veto law that allowed him to kill individual spending projects and special-interest tax breaks.

Two years later, the Supreme Court declared the law, one of the key planks of the House GOP's "Contract With America," unconstitutional because it allowed the president to amend laws passed by Congress.

Bush is now pressing for a modified, weaker version. Instead of being able to strike items from bills, he would send one or more items back to Congress for an up-or-down vote.

Present law permits Congress to ignore these proposed rescissions, but under the Bush proposal lawmakers would have to vote on them. If majorities in both the House and the Senate agreed with the president, the cuts would take effect.

"Forty-three governors have this line-item veto in their states," Bush said. "Now it's time to bring this important tool of fiscal discipline to Washington, D.C."

Bush has not vetoed any legislation during five years in office, but he said the modified line-item proposal would help reduce wasteful spending, reduce the budget deficit and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., issued statements supporting Bush, as did several conservative lawmakers.

And Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who promoted a similar approach in his presidential campaign against Bush in 2004, immediately jumped on board.

"It's no secret that President Bush and I don't agree on much, but I fully support giving him the line-item veto," Kerry said.

Lawmakers opposed to the line-item veto idea say that Congress should carefully guard its power of the purse and that presidents could use the expanded power against their political enemies.

Supporters say the practice of larding legislation with hometown projects and special-interest tax breaks has gotten out of control. Too often, a president has to accept such "pork" as the price of adopting legislation that he has little choice but to sign.

"Now it's time to bring this important tool of fiscal discipline to Washington, D.C."

Pres. Bush pressing for modified line-item veto power



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