

## Giuliani's choice

by Cal\_Thomas

Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani picked the Friday before Mother's Day to tell students at Houston Baptist University that while he "hates" abortion and finds it "morally wrong," one must leave the ultimate decision to a pregnant woman. The young products of conception whose mothers chose to have them listened intently. Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani is betting his post-9/11 image and economic conservatism will be enough to win him the nomination in a party that has not nominated a pro-choice Republican since Gerald Ford in 1976. It doesn't help that Giuliani also embraces the gay rights political agenda and stronger gun control. Imagine a Democrat telling his (or her) party what Giuliani said in his Houston speech: "If we don't find a way of uniting around broad principles that will appeal to a large segment of this country . we are going to lose this election." Would the Democratic Party drop its zealous support of abortion on demand; or its religious zeal over global warming; or its commitment to higher taxes and bigger government? No way! Only Republicans are supposed to compromise their principles and ignore - as liberals do - 40 million-plus dead babies. If Giuliani believes this, how does he explain Ronald Reagan's two terms and the presidency of once pro-choice, but then pro-life, George H.W. Bush? The consistently pro-life position of the current President Bush did not keep him from winning two terms. There is only one reason to "hate" abortion and that is that it ends a human life after it has begun, but before it has a chance to reach its potential. People who hated segregation did not sit back and, because of opposing views, do nothing to stop it. And what's this business about finding abortion "morally wrong"? Does that not imply a higher standard than a Supreme Court decision, which even some liberal law professors have criticized as constitutionally flawed? If Giuliani really hates abortion, he will propose steps to reduce their number. If he wants to split the difference on this most contentious social issue - maintaining choice while reducing the number of abortions - he could favor "truth in labeling" legislation similar to a federal law that requires information on bottles, packages and cans. Sophisticated ultrasound machines have been shown to contribute to a sharp reduction in abortions for abortion-minded women. Such a proposal would allow him a rarity in politics: to have it both ways. Should Giuliani manage to win the nomination - still a dubious prospect given his social liberalism - and should he face Hillary Clinton in the general election, social conservatives would be faced with a choice. Giuliani has promised to name "strict constructionist" judges to the Supreme Court, which is where this issue will ultimately be decided. Would social conservatives be satisfied with such a pledge; or would they stay home and not vote, allowing Clinton to win? One can be sure any judges Clinton names would have to pass an abortion "litmus test." No Supreme Court justice nominated by a modern Democratic president has voted pro-life, but several justices named by Republicans have voted pro-choice. They and the presidents who nominated them are: Warren Burger and Harry Blackmun (Nixon); John Paul Stevens (Ford); Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy (Reagan); and David Souter (Bush 41). It is no guarantee that electing a Republican president will produce pro-life justices, but it is a virtual certainty that no judge nominated by a Democratic president will disappoint the pro-choice lobby. Here is the problem for social conservatives who view abortion as the ultimate issue. If they vote for Giuliani, can they ever "go back," or will their political virginity be forever compromised? If they vote for Giuliani and he makes good on his promise to name only strict constructionists, will they be closer to achieving their objective of stopping most abortions? Should they stay home and a Democrat wins and names two or three liberal justices, their goal of halting, or at least sharply reducing the number of abortions, may be pushed back for at least a generation. Giuliani could offer a plan to substantially reduce the number of abortions, which might cut him some slack with pro-life voters. But voters also have a choice among other GOP candidates who are pro-life. If they're thinking about supporting Giuliani, they can wait until Giuliani tells them more. (c) 2007 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

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