

Hugh Scott Moves To "Restrict" Abortion

(Special to *The Wanderer*)

WASHINGTON — Hugh Scott (R., Pa.), Minority Leader of the Senate since 1969 and one of the most powerful allies of Planned Parenthood in Washington, has begun drafting a constitutional amendment to "restrict" abortion.

"The amendment will be restrictive rather than prohibitive," said the senator's press aide, which presumably means it will allow exceptions for

rape, deformity, and the mother's health. No actual draft is as yet available, however; nor is one expected to be released for "at least a month," according to staff person Tracy Mullen.

Because Scott has never been a friend of right-to-life efforts, his sudden move to offer an amendment has caused consternation in feminist circles. A recent alert from National Organization for Women (NOW) screams of "betrayal" and darkly warns that

if the anti-abortion forces can "get to" Hugh Scott, they can "get to" anybody.

On the other hand, Scott seems to be under no illusion that his efforts will win friends in the pro-life circles. He has met in recent months with at least one anti-abortion organization, the Pro-Life Coalition of Pennsylvania, which represents over 20,000 people in the Philadelphia area. But this organization plainly told him that

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it supports the Helms amendment and no other. According to Ms. Mullen, Sen. Scott is aware that the pro-life groups will settle for nothing less than a total abortion prohibition.

All of which leaves Scott's political motivation very much in darkness. Often characterized as a consummate practitioner of "suave" but "serpentine" politics, Scott is the sort of man to switch sides adroitly but hardly the sort to introduce a measure calculated to infuriate both sides. To the suggestion that Scott's move represents an administration trial balloon, his staff responds with round denial. "This is totally a matter of his own personal belief," said Ms. Mullen.

Sen. Scott is a member of Birch Bayh's subcommittee which is considering constitutional amendments.