

# Helms Rejects NC News Story

By W. H. MARSHNER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sen. Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) has moved to dispel what he called "a number of erroneous impressions" created by a *National Catholic News Service* (NC) story disseminated on March 10th. The story dealt with Helms' oral testimony on that date before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, which is currently holding hearings on anti-abortion measures.

According to the NC news story, which has appeared under various headlines in the *National Catholic Register* and in numerous diocesan papers, Helms allegedly "indicated that under his proposed amendment, State legislatures would be free to permit abortions in the case of rape, incest, or genetic disease such as Tay-Sachs." But in a March 26th letter to A. E. P. Wall, director of the NC *News Service*, Sen. Helms denied that he intended to give any such indication.

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"In the first place," Helms wrote, "it is not true, as reported, that my amendment would allow abortions in the case of rape, incest, or genetic disease such as Tay-Sachs. Abortions in these instances were cited as examples

of the so-called 'hard cases,' in response to a question from the subcommittee chairman, who inquired as to the nature of 'these difficult cases that you refer to.'

"As I repeatedly emphasized in both written and oral testimony there is nothing in my amendment

that would prevent a State from passing legislation which recognized well-established exceptions in our legal system. In all fifty States, abortion to save the life of the mother is treated like the problem of self-defense and is therefore acceptable under due process and equal protection. At the same time, there is nothing in my amendment that would force a State to establish exceptions that a particular State feels are inappropriate. My amendment would simply establish for unborn children the same even-handed legal protections of due process and equal protection that are presently extended to all children after birth, and of course to adults."

On another point, the NC news story claimed that Helms had said his amendment "would in effect prohibit the use of IUDs and the morning-after pill." This allegation, too, Helms denied.

"In the second place, it is not true," he wrote, "that my amendment would necessarily outlaw the IUD or the 'morning-after pill.' There is a great deal of

medical uncertainty as I noted in my testimony, concerning the abortifacient effects of these contraceptive devices, and it is, therefore, impossible to determine their status under my proposed amendment. Such problems would undoubtedly be solved through legislation enacted under the enforcement clause of the amendment.

"But this much we do know: overdrawn and exaggerated 'legal' technicalities are the last refuge of the pro-abortionists, and we should be wary of playing into their hands."

In the conclusion of his letter to Wall, Helms faulted the *National Catholic News Service* for ignoring the written testimony he had submitted.

"It is possible," Helms said, "to discredit almost any provision of, or amendment to, our Constitution by demanding that it clearly cover every conceivable exception whether real or imagined. Had the *National Catholic News Service* relied less upon tangential considerations and more upon the extensive, written testimony exploring the legal impact of my amendment, a great deal of misunderstanding could have been avoided."

## Repelled By Boycotts, Episcopal Bishop Resigns Texas Conference

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direction which "I do so regretfully

on March 1975 with Helms' resignation before the Constitutional Amendment

is currently holding anti-abortion measures.

According to the NC news story, which has appeared under various headlines in the *National Catholic*

*Today's Catholic*, publication of the San Antonio Archdiocese, that Bishop Gosnell has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Conference and his resignation from its committees would be a serious loss.

Established in 1969, the TCC now includes 42 ecclesiastical units of Christian denominations, including Roman Catholic and Greek

and Protestant