

# 109th Congress Gives Pro-Lifers New Hope

The infamous Roe v. Wade decision turns 31 years old this month, but the 109th Congress offers new hope. Family Voice interviewed Michael Schwartz, pro-life expert and Concerned Women for America's former vice president for government relations, about the new picture.

**Family Voice:** CWA members care deeply about abortion. What impact did the November election have on this issue?

**Mike Schwartz:** The Senate for a long time has been the graveyard for nearly all pro-life hopes and I think that may no longer be the case. It still has a pro-abortion majority, but there are new senators who may be activists for the pro-life cause: Tom Coburn, David Vitter and Jim DeMint. Sen. Santorum [R-Pennsylvania] and Sen. Brownback [R-Kansas] have provided leadership, but with some reinforcements there could be a lot more activity and certainly a lot more talk on whether killing people (abortion) is a good thing. The left is well aware how dangerous these new members of Congress are to their agenda.

**What are some legislative goals for the 109th Congress?**

Sens. Vitter [R-Louisiana], Coburn [R-Oklahoma] and DeMint [R-South Carolina] all previously served in the House, where they sponsored legislation against RU-486. Sen. Vitter also floated an idea in the House that would prevent anyone who commits abortions from receiving federal family-planning funds. They ought to be prohibited from receiving any federal funds at all. That would really



Mike joined Beverly LaHate, left, in presenting an award at CWA's 25th Anniversary to former Capitol Hill staffer Lanier Swann, center. Lanier now serves as Mike's successor as CWA's director of government relations.

make a difference. I think that we could get a majority in the House on either of those principles, if they came to a vote.

**What about the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act?**

That's a good bill. Unborn children's sensitivity to pain is much sharper than that of an adult. This bill educates mothers considering abortion of this fact. We want the public to be conscious of that, as well, because it can help change their attitude.

**With a pro-life president and new pro-life members, particularly in the Senate, can we expect that pro-life bills will just slide on through?**

Let's not forget there still is a solid majority in the Senate who are pro-abortion. There is only one pro-life Democrat left, Sen. Nelson of Nebraska, and there are

still eight or nine pro-abortion Republicans. Most of them tend to be people who have been around for a long time and therefore have a lot of seniority. They will have the power to make things difficult.

**What has President Bush contributed to this issue so far?**

Moral support, and that is not negligible. President Bush has implemented some pro-life policies in his administration. He has clearly been conscious of the importance of this issue and the evil and unconstitutionality of the *Roe v. Wade* decision in his judicial appointments.

**What victories did the pro-life community gain in the 108th Congress?**

The passage and enactment of the partial-birth abortion ban, the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. CWA helped to pass all these bills. They happened on President Bush's watch because for the first time the pro-life element controls the White House and leadership in both Houses of Congress, but we do not have the majority in the Senate.

**How many pro-life votes do we have?**

Anywhere from the low 40s to 50 or 51, depending on the bill. There are senators who don't have deep convictions on this issue, who react basically out of fear of the political consequences. At the moment, more and more Republican senators fear the consequences of offending the pro-life constituency.

**Because of the November election?**

And because of the drift inside their party.

If you're a senator who doesn't have strong views on this issue one way or another, then you're going to be a lot more afraid of a challenge within your party in the next primary election.

**How can CWA supporters help promote the pro-life cause in Congress?**

Pray unceasingly. Make sure your senators and your representative never spend one day without hearing about this issue: write, e-mail or call their offices. Make sure pro-life members are supported by prayers and the active interest of their constituents.

**Mike, it's been great having you lead CWA's governmental relations department these past four years. Now that you are working on Capitol Hill as Sen. Tom Coburn's chief of staff, we look forward to joining with you on important legislation.**

I'm confident that CWA will continue to play a constructive role in advancing an agenda that is pro-life and Biblical and that contributes to the moral regeneration to our country. My affection for CWA will go with me. ■

**Your gifts to CWA enable us to lobby on Capitol Hill and to mobilize our members to pass pro-life bills. Thank you for your support!**

**To Learn More:**

Read CWA's papers, *The Bush Administration's Record on Life Issues* by Michael Schwartz and *Talking Points on the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act*. Visit [www.cwfa.org](http://www.cwfa.org) or call 1-800-323-2200 to request your copies.