

**Walking the Line: Social Movement Interest Groups and the Delicate  
Balance Between Social Movements and Political Parties**

**By**

**Victoria Heavey Allen**

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## Abstract

### WALKING THE LINE: Social Movement Interest Groups and the Delicate Balance Between Social Movements and Political Parties

By

Victoria Heavey Allen

Adviser: Professor Frances Fox Piven

This study examines social movement interest groups (SMIGs) in the policymaking process. This dissertation offers a comprehensive analysis of the factors that both underpin and constitute the success of SMIGs in the policymaking process. It examines the opposing influences of political parties and the social movement as SMIGs attempt to achieve their policy goals through national level politics. The two cases employed in this study are the pro-life and gay rights movements and their relationship to the Republican and Democratic Parties, respectively.

This study asks if the nature of SMIGs fundamentally constrains these groups in the policymaking process. Specifically, to what extent is it necessary to compromise movement goals to work within the political process? Additionally, I explore factors that mitigate the need for compromise. Findings show that resources and the relationship to the party that accepts the social movement's issue (its home party) can reduce the need for SMIGs to compromise movement goals as well as contribute to their success in the policymaking process. Findings are based on 42 in-depth interviews of associates from interest groups, politicians, and policy experts and content analysis of Democratic and Republican National Party platforms.

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Finally, this dissertation is about social movements and the politics that spring from them. On a personal level, this project instilled in me a great respect for our political system. Although it may have many flaws, there is always hope and even more important, potential for significant social change.

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

The pro-life movement began in earnest shortly after the historic *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision in 1973 and quickly began to pressure the Democratic and Republican parties for policy change on abortion. Republican strategists took on the pro-life issue as a tactical move to both draw Catholics away from Democratic Party and invite evangelicals into party politics (many for the first time). This strategy worked, especially with regard to evangelicals who would become an integral part of the pro-life movement (Oldfield 1996; Wilcox 1992). By the late 1970s, conservative Christian interest groups had become a fixture on the political scene, and by the late 1980s had aligned themselves almost exclusively with the Republican Party. The relationship between pro-life social movement interest groups (SMIGs) and the Republican Party had solidified to such a degree that if the pro-life movement chose to engage in the political system, it was forced to do so within the Republican Party.

Like *Roe v. Wade* for the pro-life movement, the Stonewall Riots in 1969 were the catalyst that sparked the gay rights movement. The movement flourished in the 1970s, but during the 1980s experienced a series of setbacks including the emergence of AIDS (and the widespread assumption that it was a “gay disease”), the emerging strength of the Christian Right (which was firmly opposed to homosexuality), and the eight-year Reagan administration. However, these obstacles also served to mobilize and politicize the movement. Many gay men and lesbians went public with their sexuality for the first time, and new gay rights groups formed. The movement became officially aligned

with the Democratic Party when the party included gay rights in its 1980 platform, and this support has remained consistent through 2004.

Once political parties polarized around movement issues, social movements pursued less contentious interest group politics to achieve concrete policy change within the political system (Kitschelt 2006, 1989; Gunther and Diamond 2003). This gave rise to the emergence of SMIGs. SMIGs are organized very much like typical interest groups, but what distinguishes them is their dependence on the political party that accepts and supports their issue (the home party), as this is the only party through which they can realize their policy goals in Congress.

SMIGs are profoundly influenced not only by their dependence on their home party, but also by their connection to the broader movement. Social movements are committed to shared principles and have a tendency toward idealistic goals. Conversely, political parties are broader and more diverse coalitions that require constant internal negotiations as they push their political agenda in government. Social movements can limit the SMIGs' ability to work within, as well as compromise with, the home party. Likewise, political parties can place unrealistic demands for compromise on SMIGs, which are defined and constrained by the movement from which they evolved. The delicate position of SMIGs between the home party and the broader movement creates a constant tension. SMIGs must master a careful balancing act between the two as they attempt to influence public policy and, at the same time, not stray too far from their original goals. I will explore this dynamic as it relates to major

national-level social movement interest groups that emerged from both the pro-life and the gay rights movements.

The stories of the pro-life and gay rights movements reflect a typical chain of events in the life cycle of American social movements. In the 1960s and 1970s, several social movements emerged that focused on previously ignored issues and groups in American society. To gain attention for their issues, these social movements often engaged in disruptive behavior, operating outside traditional political channels. When successful, social movements forced those traditional channels to reexamine movement issues. The divisive nature typical of movement issues resulted in polarization of the political parties. When social movements are successful at inserting their issues onto the national policy agenda through a supportive party, it often comes at the expense of gaining a vocal foe in the form of the opposing party.

Through this study, I seek to advance the understanding of the interest group-political party relationship in the policymaking process. According to Thomas, "There are party scholars and there are interest group scholars but rarely scholars who integrate both...the result has been extensive work on political parties, an increasing literature on interest groups, but relatively little work on the essential importance of the party-group relationship itself" (2001, 80). Further, Tarrow advises that "we be more precise about the relations between movements and institutional politics." He concludes that this is "a conceptual task that remains to be completed" (1996, 874). In this study, I aim to fill this gap in the literature by examining SMIGs and their relationship with

political parties in the policymaking process. I will address the interest group-party relationship in the context of SMIGs and their home parties.

I conduct this study of the interest group–political party relationship by focusing on two of the most highly contentious issues in domestic politics today – abortion and gay rights. These two issues represent major dividing lines between political parties as well as among the American people (Layman and Carsey 2002; Hunter 1983; Oldfield 1996). A greater understanding of these issues and the SMIGs that represent them in the policymaking process is critical, as gay rights and abortion are far from settled areas of public policy.

### **Principle Claims**

This study seeks to examine what I refer to as social movement interest groups (SMIGs), a specific type of interest group that evolves from social movements. In establishing a clear and unifying description for this type of group, I classify SMIGs as interest groups. This study further addresses gaps in the social movement and interest group literature by observing SMIGs through the lens of the pro-life and gay rights movements. I have developed the following claims about social movements, SMIGs and political parties in the policymaking process:

1. Most social movements polarize political parties.
2. As a result of polarization, SMIGs find it possible to work with only one party, the home party, which embraces the movement's goals. SMIGs are subsequently rejected by the opposing party.

3. SMIGs view themselves as caught between both the ideological constraints posed by the movement and the home party's demand for compromise.
4. Two factors shape the relationship between SMIGs and the home party:
  - a. First, the relationship between the home party and the *collective* group of SMIGs that emerge from a social movement is shaped by the strength of the home party's affiliation with the broader movement and the collective resources available to the SMIGs that emerged from that movement.
  - b. The relationship between an *individual* SMIG and the home party is shaped by the SMIG's affiliation with the home party and the group's individual resources.
5. Both the strength of the home party relationship and resources enable SMIGs, singly and together, to overcome the constraints of the home party relationship. Greater resources reduce the need for the SMIG to compromise on its policy goals. Additionally, a stronger home party relationship facilitates the addition of movement goals to the party's policy agenda.
6. SMIGs are arrayed on a continuum between the movement and the home party, with those closer to the party exercising greater influence over its agenda. The SMIG that is closest to the home party is viewed with envy and disdain by the other SMIGs.

## **Theorizing about Social Movements, SMIGs and Political Parties**

### Social Movements Find Their Voice

Social movements arise when groups are unable to work through conventional channels like political parties to advance new claims in the policymaking process (Kitschelt 1993). Social movements operate outside the party system primarily because they are excluded from it, particularly the two-party system in the United States (Scarrow 1999; Clemens 1997; Tarrow 1994; Rosenstone et al. 1996). Consequently, social movements will often engage in disruptive and confrontational political action to gain party recognition of their issues (Piven 2006).

When a social movement emerges and begins to exert pressure on political parties for policy change, three scenarios can ensue. First, the movement may be so radical that it is rejected by both major political parties. Since political parties tend to pursue inclusive strategies, if party leaders view the social movement's issues as too radical or unacceptable to society at large, they will choose to ignore that group and its issues (e.g. the Patriot Movement) (Frymer 1999). Second, both parties can incorporate a movement onto their agendas if it represents a new issue supported by a large segment of the population (e.g. the environmental and disability rights movements). In this case, both political parties view the social movement's issue as acceptable to large sectors of their membership and subsequently part of an inclusive strategy. Third, although both rejection and incorporation of movements and their issues into political parties does occur, the vast majority of successful movements tend to polarize

political parties on their issues (Offe 1990; Piven 1991; Piven and Cloward 1977). When political parties hold opposing positions on a social movement's issue, it results in major cleavages between the parties (Adams 1997; Aldrich 1995; Jacobson 2000; Layman 2001; Layman and Carsey 2002; Rohde 1991).

### Political Parties and Interest Groups Defined

This study employs Key's (1964), Sorouf's (1968), and Aldrich's (1995) definition of political parties. Specifically, these scholars break down political parties into three sub-divisions: the party organization, the party-in-government, and the party-in-the-electorate. The party organization refers to local, state and national party organizations and the activists and elected party leaders who recruit candidates, raise funds, mobilize voters and set the policy agenda. The party-in-government consists of elected officials who identify with the party and carry out policymaking. The party-in-the-electorate consists of individuals who identify with the political party and vote for its candidates. Since this is a study of organizations (SMIGs), movements and parties, I will rely in this project on the first two categorizations of party (party organization and party-in-government) as the working definition of political parties.

This study draws from several interest group theorists to arrive at a simple definition of interest groups. The key defining feature of interest groups is that they are formal organizations that interact with government in an attempt to influence public policy (Heinz et al. 1993). As Knoke points out, "[W]henever associations attempt to influence governmental decisions, they are acting as interest groups" (1986, 2). In response to scholars who view interest groups

strictly as membership organizations (Walker 1991), this study defines interest groups as any organization that engages with government in the process of policymaking (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Salisbury 1994, 1984).

### Interest Groups and Political Parties in the Policymaking Process

Political parties are critical to the policymaking process because they control the political and legislative agenda (Frymer 1999). Although interest groups seek to influence government policy on particular issues, it is political parties that actually create public policy and control government (Schattschneider 1960). Interest groups remain outside of government while political parties operate within it (Schattschneider 1942; Fine 1994). Subsequently, interest groups depend on political parties (to varying degrees) to achieve their policy objectives since parties are the vehicle through which policy is made (Aldrich 1995). This point is particularly important in the study of SMIGs that are not only dependent upon the parties but on just one party -- their home party.

Most studies of the interest group-political party relationship examine groups that are able to work with both major political parties. In fact, conventional interest groups strive to work with both the Republican and the Democratic Parties whenever possible. It is when interest groups are removed from partisan politics that they can exert the greatest influence (Hanson 1991). Even groups with clear partisan preferences are compelled to stay above the fray in order to avoid being shut out should an election produce a change in leadership (Berry 1997).

Fine (1994) explores interest group strategies for developing relationships with political parties and subsequently influencing policy. The first approach is the “greater access” approach where interest groups gravitate toward the political party that would be more receptive to their issue. Second is the “power center” approach where interest groups anticipate who will be the winner of a particular election or set of elections, and direct their energy toward that political party. Third, interest groups can take the “even money” approach, attempting to communicate and develop relationships with both political parties in order to have influence with whichever political party wins. Finally, interest groups can opt to take the “friendly ear” approach where they communicate only with the political party that is more inclined to support their policy objectives. Interest groups, then, derive much of their power through their ability to work with both parties.

The first three approaches do not work for SMIGs since the opposing party rejects their issues. SMIGs can only use the friendly ear approach, and resign themselves to trying to cultivate the best possible relationship with the home party – the only forum for their issue in the governmental policymaking process. As a result, such groups are always dependent to some degree on the home party.

### SMIGs Emerge

Once a social movement gains acceptance by the home party, it begins to bureaucratize, spurring the creation of formal organizations which adopt

mainstream interest group strategies. These groups are typically described by the social movement literature as social movement organizations or SMOs (Costain and Costain 1987; Lowi 1971; Piven and Cloward 1979; Tarrow 1994; Zald and Ash 1966). Most scholars define SMOs as formal organizations that identify with the movement and attempt to implement its policy agenda (McCarthy and Zald 1977). According to scholars of social movements, SMOs exist in a gray area between social movements and interest groups. Although most scholars of SMOs do not classify them as interest groups, a few are beginning to acknowledge the overwhelming similarities between SMOs and interest groups as well as the ineffectiveness of the two separate classifications (McAdam et al. 1996, 2001). Despite the fact that these organizations differ in certain ways, their function in relation to political parties is the same – attempting to influence the party and policy outcomes.

In contrast to social movements, SMOs are considered more conservative because they tend to shift from the change-oriented strategies of the movement to those of organizational maintenance (Michels 1998; Piven and Cloward 1993). As an SMO engages in organizational maintenance, it transforms from its ideological roots to an organization that is primarily focused on maintaining membership, funds, and other organizational requirements. In an effort to maintain an organization's viability, the original movement goals are often modified to meet societal norms and reduce or avoid conflicts (Zald and Ash 1966; Thomas 2001). In other words, scholars argue, these groups ultimately abandon many of the goals for which they were originally founded. I

argue that organizational maintenance can better be described as the necessary compromise inherent in working with political parties – not a complete rejection of movement goals.

During this phase in the movement which is dominated by SMIGs (SMOs), social movement scholars argue that the movement declines or even ceases to exist (Kitschelt 1993). This decline is typically due to co-optation by parties and elites, internal organizational divisions and the demobilization of movement followers. Offe (1990) describes this as a “stagnation phase” in which enthusiasm for the movement declines. Tarrow (1994) contends that when a movement institutionalizes and yields interest groups, it both subverts the original movement goals and allows political elites to determine the agenda. These scholars tend to view the movement as weakened or nonexistent by the time it reaches the institutionalization phase. I argue that the social movement retains power in this latent phase. Latent social movements have a “threat potential” of which political parties are aware (Kitschelt 1993). I challenge Tarrow’s observation that social movement institutionalization subverts the movement’s goals and assert that SMIGs actually cannot stray too far from the broader movement’s ideological agenda without losing the support of the other SMIGs emerging from the same social movement. SMIGs are obliged to work within the parameters of the broader movement and cannot completely abandon the policy goals upon which they were founded (Heaney and Rojas 2007).

### SMIGs Marshall Their Resources

Typically, political parties tap into interest group resources in exchange for policy consideration. As might be expected, this exchange is often most active during the election season for the purpose of capturing votes (Kriesi 2004; Piven and Cloward 1988; Tarrow 1994). Milkis (1993) describes this phenomenon as “ideological patronage,” which political parties will offer groups in exchange for mobilization on election day. Although typical interest groups can pursue either party in order to obtain the best deal for their group, SMIGs have less ability to bargain because they cannot threaten to shift their support to the opposing party. Frymer discusses this concept in terms of electoral voting blocks, calling them “captured groups” (1999). Captured groups, according to Frymer, are invariably neglected by their party because they lack the exit option.

However, SMIGs are not completely powerless and can forward the movement’s agenda if they have resources that they can leverage in their relationship with their home party. Although SMIGs are unable to shift allegiances between parties, resources can place SMIGs in a better bargaining position with their home party. I use the term resources in two ways – first, to describe services that SMIGs can deliver to the political parties (collaborative resources), and, second, to identify resources which enhance SMIG’s bargaining position with the home party (coercive resources). These resources include: mobilizing voters and opposition, the liaison function within Congress and between Congress and SMIG membership, recruiting and training

candidates, money, radical SMIGs, the movement itself, public opinion, and strategic alliances with other groups (Fowler and Shaiko 1987; Rothenberg 1992; Zald and McCarthy 1979; Hanson 1991).

### Success in the Policymaking Arena

In this study, I attribute political success of SMIGs in part to the successful use of their resources. This study focuses on the SMIGs' ability to manipulate the legislative process to some degree. Several scholars have addressed this concept of success. Policy success is, first, simply compelling political parties to articulate a position on the social movement's issue (Burstein et al. 1995; Gamson 1995; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Offe 1990). Appearance of the issue on the party's platform, then, would constitute this first stage of success. Gamson (1975) makes the distinction between acceptance of the movement's issues and acquisition of new advantages. Jenkins (1983) expands on this idea by developing six different types of outcomes in the policymaking process: access, agenda, policy, output, impact and structural outcomes. In this study, I will focus on the first three of Jenkins' six categories. Access is similar to Gamson's description of acceptance, which is simply a point of entry for SMIGs as their issue becomes a topic of discussion in Congress. Agenda refers to when the issue becomes a part of the legislative agenda for a party. The act of simply including an issue in the platform is evidence of a victory for a SMIG because it is evidence that the issue has been put into play. Fine observes: "[A]n interest group whose perspective is

reflected in a platform benefits in several ways because its view is endorsed by political party leaders and delegates representing the party faithful...Because platforms are intended to provide campaign guidance and policy direction, an interest group's perspective once adopted is brought further into the political mainstream" (1994, 518). Finally, policy refers to the actual passage of legislation. The final three -- output (enforcing and implementing legislation); impact (actual improvement of the prior condition); and structural outcomes (the actual transformation of either social or political arrangements) -- are beyond the scope of this study.

### **Case Selection**

This dissertation relies on two cases: 1) the pro-life social movement, which includes pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party, and 2) the gay rights movement, which includes gay rights SMIGs and the Democratic Party. These cases were selected for several reasons. First, both involve highly divisive and emotionally charged issues that have been at the center of debate within and outside of government during the past 30 years. Second, although both of these policy areas have been studied extensively, few scholars have examined the groups that evolve from social movements as a distinctive type of interest group, and the implications for policymaking. Only a few studies examine the experience of this type of interest group in the policymaking process (Lindblom 1977; Hershey 1993; Brown 1995). This job has largely been left to sociologists who describe SMIGs as social movement organizations. This study aims to place SMIGs into the political science literature as a distinctive type of interest

group. The tension that SMIGs experience between the movement and the political party causes particular challenges in the policymaking process. Third, I selected two cases with two different home parties, since there are substantial cultural differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties (Freeman 1986). In doing so, I hope that the results of this study might be instructive to the study of SMIGs generally (Przeworski and Teune 1982). Finally, these two cases have been chosen to explore the claims for this dissertation. For example, each movement encompasses a number of SMIGs, making it possible to explore both their collective and individual relationship with the home party.

### **Research Design**

This dissertation offers a comprehensive analysis of the factors that both underpin and constitute the success of social movement interest groups in the policymaking process. For both cases, I present a systematic inquiry into the current relationship between the movement, the home party, and the SMIGs. My case studies focus on two sets of social movement interest groups: those that emerged from the pro-life movement and those that emerged from the gay rights movement. This dissertation evaluates the role and impact of pro-life and gay rights SMIGs in the policymaking process. Specifically, I examine the opposing influences of the home party and the broader social movement as SMIGs attempt to further their agenda in the national policymaking process. The broader movement tends to pull SMIGs in a more ideological direction

while political parties attempt to influence the SMIGs to compromise on their issues.

Claims one and two deal with party polarization as a result of social movement influence. In claim one, I assert that most social movements, as the literature suggests, polarize political parties. Claim two deals with the impact of that polarization. Social movement interest groups that polarize the parties then find it possible to work with only one party, the home party. While the home party embraces movement goals, the opposing party rejects them. To test claims one and two, I used content analysis of the Democratic and Republican National Party platforms to chart party polarization for both the abortion and gay rights issues. If, in fact, there is polarization on the issue, the platform should show when the issue was introduced, the intensity of polarization between the parties, and the change (if any) in polarization over time. The interviews and content analysis of presidential statements and positions also helped develop a political history of each movement from 1968-2004 as well as explain specific changes in policy and position on the platform.

The third claim addresses the SMIG's perception of being caught between the ideological constraints posed by the movement and the home party's demand for compromise. If this claim is true, SMIG members would testify that they believe they are marginalized by fellow SMIGs when they compromise movement goals to further their relationship with the home party. Further, SMIG members would express a belief that they have to demand certain policy initiatives (however unrealistic) in order to remain in good

standing with the other SMIGs. For this claim, it was first important to identify which SMIGs are the major players in both gay rights and pro-life politics. The interviews enabled me to identify the main national level social movement interest groups for the pro-life and gay rights movements. Next, the interviews would reflect the perception of SMIG policy analysts with regard to the influence of the home party and the broader movement.

Claims four(a) and four(b) address both the relationship between the SMIG and the home party as well as the SMIG and the broader movement. Specifically, the relationship between SMIGs and their home party is shaped both by the home party's affiliation with the movement and the resources available to the SMIGs. Claim four(a), refers to the SMIGs as a collective entity – a group of SMIGs that emerged from the same movement. In this case, the relationship is shaped by the SMIGs' affiliation with the home party as well as the collective resources available to the SMIGs. Claim four(b) refers to individual SMIGs. Specifically the relationship between an individual SMIG and the home party is shaped by the SMIG's affiliation with the home party as well as the individual resources available to that particular SMIG.

In both of these claims, we would expect to find that the SMIG or group of SMIGs with greater resources and/or a stronger relationship with the home party would be able to extract greater policy concessions. I identify SMIG resources in the policymaking process through the interviews as well as secondary sources. Next, I examine the impact of resources and the home party relationship to evaluate SMIG's success in the policymaking process.

Claim five is related to four(a) and four(b). Specifically, both the home party relationship and resources can enable SMIGs to overcome the constraints of the home party relationship. Greater resources reduce the need for the SMIG to compromise on its policy goals and a stronger home party relationship facilitates the addition of movement goals to the party's policy agenda. Again, the interviews would reveal if SMIGs were able to overcome the constraints of the home party relationship and under which conditions this occurred.

All SMIGs are not equal in strength, resources, and relationship to the home party. In claim six, I argue that SMIGs are arrayed on a continuum with some closer to and others farther away from the home party and its policy agenda. Moreover, the SMIG that is closest to the home party is viewed with envy and disdain by the other SMIGs. I would expect to find that the SMIG with the closest relationship with the home party would be criticized by the other SMIGs as compromising too much with the home party and considered a sell out by the other SMIGs. The interviews would reveal both the positions of the SMIGs and their opinions on their fellow SMIGs.

## **Data Collection**

### Personal interviews

To identify the main national level social movement interest groups for the pro-life and gay rights movements, as well as their resources in the policymaking process, I conducted 42 in-depth open-ended interviews with policy analysts of pro-life and gay rights SMIGs as well as Congressional staff

members and experts in the field (See Appendix I). These interviews took place in person and primarily in Washington D.C.. The interviews took place in the offices of the interest groups and lasted between one and two hours. (Two interviews were conducted over the telephone and one via email.)

I relied primarily on the interviews to compile a reliable list of the main national “players” among SMIGs that emerged from each movement. To establish this list of major SMIGs and individuals within each social movement, I employed the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling relies on a referral system. After initial contacts are identified, each respondent is asked to provide the name of an additional subject, subsequently amassing an ever-expanding universe of potential contacts (Vogt 1999). This method was selected because it is often used in cases where the researcher is trying to identify an otherwise hidden, rare, or hard to locate population. Further, snowball sampling has been established as a good approach for information-rich respondents and those that require a certain degree of trust to allow the interviewer to initiate contact (Patton 1990; Atkinson and Flint 2001). Since initial case selection is critical in snowball sampling, I consulted several scholars who were experts in the subject areas. These experts included Clyde Wilcox of Georgetown University, who has conducted extensive research on both the Christian Right and the gay rights movements; Kenneth Sherrill of Hunter College, a noted expert on gay rights; and Donald Haider-Markel of the University of Kansas, who has extensively researched the gay rights movement and gay rights interest groups.

### Content analysis of Democratic and Republican National Party platforms

In order to demonstrate the political progress of each movement from its inception through 2004, I conducted content analyses of the Democratic and Republican National Party platforms from 1968-2004. As a measure of political party polarization over time, examination of platforms is a reasonable and reliable measure. I was able to track the date of entrance of the issue onto the party agenda, addition or omission of specific policy proposals, strength of party commitment to the issue, and correlation between the platform position and the SMIGs policy proposals. This last point also helped me assess the strength of the relationship between SMIGs and their home party. Similar policy agendas between SMIGs and their home party indicate a strong relationship, while a dissimilar agenda indicate a weak relationship.

Some scholars have assessed party platforms as an inadequate measure of the party's policy goals (Maisel 1993-1994), reflecting extreme political party positions (Layman and Carsey 2002) which are sometimes not even taken seriously by the political party's own presidential candidate (Stone et al. 1990). Increasingly, however, platforms are considered an important component of the agenda-building process on the national level (Waters 1990; Fine 1994). Scholars found a significant link between proposals contained in the platform and actual policymaking when that the political party wins office (Fishel 1985). Contrary to the view that platform proposals are radical or out of step with the average party member, studies show that the winning political

party does attempt to realize policy proposals that are contained in their platforms (Monroe 1983). Most notable is Pomper's (1980) study that examined political party platforms from 1944 to 1976 and found that approximately 72% of platform pledges were fulfilled through subsequent public policy decisions of the winning candidate. These studies demonstrate that platforms are an important component of the political party's agenda-setting process.

#### Presidential candidate and officeholder's statements on abortion and gay rights

For the period between 1968 and 2004, I conducted content analysis of the *New York Times* and other major newspapers to compile presidential initiatives and statements on abortion and gay rights as well as actions and statements by presidential aspirants. Scholars have demonstrated that incumbent presidents and nominees have significant influence (if they choose to exercise it) over the content of the national political party platform (Maisel 1992), and once elected, the president often has the power to lead public policy formation for his party as well as the power to "persuade" (Neustadt 1980). Presidents can increase the salience of an issue by using the powers of the office to publicize it (Canes-Wrone 2001), as well as increase popular support for specific policy proposals (Kernell 1986). Finally, presidents can direct the nation's and the national government's attention to the administration's policy priorities (Kernell 1986; Edwards and Wood 1999). By examining the

president's position on abortion and gay rights, I am able to assess party polarization on, and party commitment to the issues.

### **Key Findings**

This study has yielded several important findings. First, the reliance of SMIGs on both the social movements and the home parties clearly has influenced their ability to operate in the political system. A tension is evident in both cases as the SMIGs each attempted to respond to two masters -- the broader movement and the home party. The social movement is idealistic and uncompromising by nature while the home party is practical, requiring compromise. SMIGs that are closer to the movement ideology are less able to form a close relationship with the party, and vice versa.

Second, SMIGs that garner significant resources can often surmount the obstacles that arise from tension between the home party and the broader movement. Resources include grassroots support, money, public opinion, and access. The strength of the broader movement itself and the level of acceptance by the home party appear to be the greatest assets for SMIGs.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation includes six chapters. This chapter provides a theoretical framework that draws on the social movement, political party and interest group literatures to explain how SMIGs operate in the policymaking

process. The dissertation is then divided into two parts -- with two chapters each -- to examine the pro-life and gay rights cases.

Chapters Two and Four examine the evolution of the movements, creation of SMIGs and the attachment of SMIGs to the home party. These chapters demonstrate the increasing political party polarization between the Republican and Democratic Parties on both issues through a comprehensive analysis of national political party platforms. This polarization results in the establishment of one party as the home party of each SMIG.

Chapters Three and Five begin with a description of the major national SMIGs ("the players"). Relying heavily on personal interviews of the players in each movement, these chapters address claims about the tension between the broader movement and the home party. It examines the access that the SMIGs have to their home party and assesses the impact of resources on the relationship between the SMIGs and the home parties.

Finally, in the Conclusion, the two cases are compared and contrasted. I particularly explore the ways in which the two cases differ. I expect that two factors account for many of the differences among SMIGs. The first is the degree to which the home party accepts the SMIGs (and the movement's issues). The second factor is the varying resources that SMIGs possess. I conclude by presenting the major findings of my dissertation.

## **CHAPTER TWO - THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY**

This chapter examines the pro-life movement, the emergence of pro-life SMIGs and the burgeoning relationship between pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party from the 1960s through 2004. Through an analysis of political party platforms, presidential politics, organizational literature, and secondary sources, I will demonstrate that both the Republican and the Democratic Parties were compelled to take a stand on abortion when the pro-life movement raised awareness of the issue to the national level.<sup>1</sup> Abortion became a point of political party polarization in the 1980s as the Republican Party supported the pro-life movement, becoming its home party, and the Democratic Party rejected the pro-life movement. SMIGs emerged to advance the pro-life movement's political demands. This chapter is organized chronologically with divisions that follow the major changes in the relationship between the movement, the SMIGs, and the Republican Party.

### **Prelude to a Movement (1960s-1972)**

Until the 1960s, abortion was restricted in most states. However, despite these restrictions, abortion was routinely (albeit quietly) performed throughout the United States. Then, in the 1960s, the issue of abortion began to enter the American public policy landscape (Mohr 1978). What was once a private

<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the pro-choice movement had an equally strong impact on party polarization.

matter slowly became one of public, and eventually, political debate. Social, political and legal developments including the emergence of the women's movement, the incorporation of the issue of abortion by other groups, and national media attention, laid the groundwork for the *Roe v. Wade* (1973) decision by the Supreme Court. However, during this period, neither the Republican nor the Democratic Party established an official position on the abortion issue (Segers 1995).

Perhaps the single largest factor to thrust abortion into the national policy arena was another movement -- the woman's movement -- which reframed abortion in terms of women's rights. Luker observes, "[T]he emergence of women as a self-conscious interest group that claimed abortion as a right marked a new and fundamentally different stage in the abortion debate" (1984, 93). The women's movement succeeded in framing the right to an abortion as an integral component of equal rights of the sexes (Ginsburg 1989). The women's movement additionally initiated the discussion about the need to make abortion safe and legal (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

Three prominent women's rights groups emerged in the 1960s and helped to establish abortion as a women's rights issue. The National Organization for Women (NOW) was the first women's group to explicitly deal with the subject of abortion. As early as 1967, NOW called for the repeal of abortion laws, specifically "the right of women to control their own reproductive lives...by repealing penal laws governing abortion" (O'Connor 1996, 30). The National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL, which soon became the

National Abortion Rights Action League under the same acronym) also explicitly advocated for a woman's right to have an abortion. Planned Parenthood joined the other pro-choice groups in supporting abortion rights by 1970.

Other organizations buttressed the efforts of women's groups by also recommending the legalization of abortion. The American Law Institute (ALI) proposed the legalization of abortion as part of its "Model Penal Code." The ALI was conservative in its recommendations and advocated for abortion rights only in limited cases: when the pregnancy would have adverse physical or mental effects on the woman, in cases of severe physical or mental defects of the fetus, or when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest (Ginsburg 1989). By the late 1960s, several states adopted the ALI Model including Colorado, California, Oregon, and North Carolina. Other states exceeded the ALI statute, calling for abortion on demand in the first two trimesters. For example, in 1970, New York passed a statute allowing for abortion on demand up until the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington soon followed New York's lead – virtually eliminating barriers to abortion in their states (Tribe 1990).

Although individual states were reassessing their abortion laws in the 1960s, abortion did not become a topic of public debate until the case of Sherri Finkbine in 1962. Finkbine, a married mother of four children, sought an abortion after discovering that thalidomide, a drug she had taken during her pregnancy had caused severe deformities to the fetus she was carrying. Finkbine scheduled an abortion with her doctor, but when the story hit the local

paper,<sup>2</sup> the hospital promptly cancelled the procedure. Finkbine was unable to obtain an abortion in the United States and ultimately traveled to Sweden to have one (O'Connor 1996). The Finkbine case sparked public debate on abortion – particularly, about which circumstances legitimized abortion (Luker 1984). Most people sympathized with her case. Ginsburg explains: “Mrs. Finkbine was not a radical or activist, nor was she sexually irresponsible. She had very much wanted her pregnancy and considered abortion justified only in exceptional cases. She judged her choice to be unfortunate but necessary and correct. These qualities made her a persuasive and compelling figure to the American public” (1989, 36). Women identified with Sherri Finkbine and the story made many of them consider or reconsider their position on abortion.

Next, the issue of reproductive rights made its way to the Supreme Court through the cases of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and *United States v. Vuitch* (1971). In *Griswold*, the Supreme Court established what it described as a “fundamental zone of privacy” by striking down a Connecticut law that had made it illegal to disseminate information about contraceptives to married couples. *Griswold* was also important because it was a wake-up call for the Catholic Church. Although the church had always maintained a pro-life position on abortion, it was not particularly involved in public policy formation on the issue. Immediately after the *Griswold* decision, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) earmarked \$50,000 for abortion repeal efforts. The following year, the Catholic Church established the Family Life Division

<sup>2</sup> Finkbine actually broke the story herself in an effort to inform other women about the dangerous affects of Thalidomide.

with the sole purpose of addressing abortion policy (Petchesky 1984). The Family Life Division monitored state abortion law, provided abortion information to pro-life activists, and issued formal church statements (Segers 1995).

*Vuitch* was the Supreme Court's first case that directly involved abortion. In its decision, the Court upheld a Washington D.C. law permitting abortion in cases where the woman's life or health was in jeopardy. The court defined health broadly in this case to include not only physical but also psychological well-being.

On the eve of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the pro-life movement was in its infancy, confined primarily to the Catholic Church. However, the issue of abortion and particularly the pro-choice side of the debate had entered the public consciousness. Although some states had addressed abortion policy, political parties were latecomers to the debate and neither had established a position on the issue. All of that would change with *Roe v. Wade*, forcing political parties to take a position on abortion in the following decade.

### **Roe v. Wade Ignites a Movement (1973-1979)**

The Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) established the right to an abortion (under most circumstances) in all 50 states, and changed the landscape of the abortion debate – igniting a movement on both sides of the issue (Luker 1984; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Staggenborg 1991). Norma McCorvey (a.k.a. Jane Roe) was a single, 23-year-old pregnant woman who sought an abortion but was unable to find a doctor to perform it. Texas law

restricted abortion at any stage of gestation except to save the life of the woman. McCorvey sued for the right to have an abortion and the case made its way to the Supreme Court on appeal. The resulting decision, *Roe v. Wade*, established a constitutionally protected right to an abortion – effectively striking down most state restrictions. Interestingly, the companion case to *Roe*, *Doe v. Bolton*, had perhaps farther reaching effects. *Doe* liberalized conditions under which a woman could have an abortion by broadening the definition of the health exception for abortion to include physical, emotional, psychological and familial factors, as well as the life of the mother. *Doe* also established that the states may not make abortion unreasonably difficult to obtain through procedural barriers. Finally, *Doe* ruled that under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the status of personhood only has application after birth (Wilcox 1995).

*Roe* and *Doe* turned a small, primarily Catholic issue into one of major national policy debate (Tribe 1990). Both those opposed to and those in favor of abortion rights were startled by the magnitude of the sweeping decision, which made abortion a constitutional right in all 50 states. The nascent pro-life movement shifted into high gear to address what it considered a radical and ill-founded decision. For those opposed to abortion:

It seemed to them that the Court had suddenly and irrationally decided to undermine something basic in American life, and they were shocked and horrified...they simply couldn't believe such a movement would get very far. They tacitly assumed that the unsavory connotation of abortion rested on a deep belief in the sacredness of embryonic life, and they found it hard to understand how such a belief could be changed so quickly. They counted on public opinion to be outraged and were stunned when most of the public was either unaware or unconcerned (Luker 1984, 126).

The Catholic Church quickly reacted to *Roe v. Wade*, the first pro-life organization to do so perhaps “because of the lack of existence of others” (Doerflinger interview). It “provided infrastructure, communications network, material backing, ideology and people – in short, the resources and organizational facility that helped mobilize the movement in its early stages into a national presence” (Ginsburg 1989, 44). The foot soldiers for the movement also came out of the Church. Catholics made up the bulk of the first wave of pro-life activists. Interestingly, many of these Catholics were also Democrats. One activist recounted attending his first pro-life meeting in the 1970s. Out of 24 people present, all were Democrats, and all but one was Catholic (Schwartz interview). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Family Life Division (USCCB) called for an immediate reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. The Bishops issued a “Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activists” which advocated a constitutional amendment outlawing abortion, the creation of pro-life groups and committees on all levels in the church, and a public information campaign targeted at elected officials and candidates for office (O'Connor 1996). The Bishops also issued letters stating the Church’s position on abortion. These letters have been regarded by Congressional insiders as a powerful lobbying tool (Cole interview). In one such letter, the Bishops argued that Catholic hospitals would not and could not comply with laws that required the hospital to provide abortion services. Additionally, the letter stated that as a matter of conscience, Catholic doctors and nurses could not participate in abortion procedures (Segers 1995). In response, Congress passed legislation in June,

1973 to protect the pro-life position of Catholic hospitals and their employees. This decision affected more than 600 Catholic hospitals across the United States. Despite some early success and influence in the early days of the abortion movement, however, the church failed to, in Schattschneider's words, "broaden the scope of the issue" and lead the pro-life issue among non-Catholics (1960).

Although Catholics reacted to *Roe v. Wade* first, evangelicals soon became a potent political force in pro-life politics. Conservative Christians had historically insulated themselves from the secular world, which they viewed as increasingly corrupt and un-Christian (Rozell and Wilcox 1997; Oldfield 1996). However, by the 1970s, evangelical Christians began to conclude that they should become politically involved since others who did not share their beliefs were crafting public policy on many of the most pressing social issues (Bruce 1987; Crawford 1980; Jorstad 1981; Liebman et al. 1983; Wald 1987).

Not long after *Roe v. Wade*, evangelicals began to mobilize politically in opposition to abortion (Luker 1984), and quickly emerged as the driving force in pro-life politics. Unlike the Catholics, who were already aligned with the Democratic Party, Conservative Christians had not been politically active up to this point, and many decided to enter politics for the first time as Republicans. O'Conner observes that during the 1970s, "[T]he evangelical right would not only politically align itself with the more conservative Republican Party but also prove to be a more potent political force than even the Roman Catholic Church in the abortion debate and in political party politics" (1996, 61). Several pro-life

groups formed, including the National Right to Life Committee, and other conservative Christian groups that were already in existence, like Eagle Forum, incorporated the abortion issue onto their agenda. By the end of the 1970s, evangelicals and conservative Christian SMIGs overshadowed the Catholic Church in the pro-life movement.

Despite *Roe* and the increasing mobilization on the abortion issue during the 1970s, presidents and presidential aspirants failed to take a strong position on either side of the abortion issue. Richard Nixon was president when *Roe* was decided but did little about the issue. Soon after, Nixon became embroiled in the Watergate scandal which led to his resignation. Former House Minority Leader turned Vice President Gerald Ford replaced Nixon in 1974, and by 1976 when Ford ran for re-election against Democrat Jimmy Carter, he was in a tough position. His wife had already publicly expressed her support for both abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment (Ribuffo 2006). Ford tried to avoid responding to the issue by calling for a constitutional amendment that would make abortion a state issue. He ultimately pledged his support to the right to an abortion, but only in cases of rape or when the mother's life was in danger (Tribe 1990).

In that same year, the Republican and Democratic national platforms addressed abortion for the first time. Oldfield states, "[O]f particular significance was the entrance of the abortion issue into the partisan arena. In the wake of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, political parties took cautious, but nonetheless

opposing positions on the issue: the Republicans for and the Democrats against a constitutional amendment to overturn *Roe v. Wade*" (1996, 107-108).

The Democratic platform was tactfully but decidedly pro-choice. It acknowledged the differing viewpoints on abortion throughout the American electorate and within its own party. In fact, the party was so divided on the issue that 10,000 pro-lifers protested outside the 1976 Democratic convention in New York seeking the inclusion of a pro-life plank in the platform (Kihss 1976). Ultimately the platform stated, "[W]e fully recognize the religious and ethical nature of the concerns which many Americans have on the subject of abortion. We feel, however, that it is undesirable to attempt to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn the Supreme Court decision in this area" (Democratic National Committee 1976). However, instead of making abortion a moral issue, the Democrats tried to diffuse it by opposing Republican proposals for a Constitutional amendment.

The Republican Party was also experiencing major internal divisions and had not yet crystallized its position on abortion. The platform acknowledged these divisions within the party, "[T]he question of abortion is one of the most difficult and controversial of our time...[T]here are those in our Party who favor complete support for the Supreme Court decision which permits abortion on demand. There are those who share sincere convictions that the Supreme Court's decision must be changed by a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortions." Notwithstanding the internal disagreements, the Republicans opted to stake out a pro-life position. "[W]e protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into

the family structure through its denial of the parent's obligation and right to guide their minor children...[The Republican Party] supports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children" (Republican National Committee 1976).

Benefiting from public disaffection over Watergate and Gerald Ford's decision to pardon Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter won the 1976 presidential election. Since the pro-life movement had yet to establish a home party, his presidency was a pivotal time. Even though the parties had taken opposing positions on abortion, the issue continued to be up for grabs since both political parties remained divided. Jimmy Carter could have developed the pro-life issue within the Democratic Party. Many pro-lifers were Catholic and already affiliated with the Democratic Party and many evangelicals were entering politics for the first time. One pro-life activist argued, "[T]he movement could have gone either way" (Schwartz interview).

In the end, however, Jimmy Carter failed to incorporate evangelicals into the Democratic Party while succeeding in distancing Catholics. It is ironic that Carter failed to incorporate evangelicals, because many voted for the first time as a result of his candidacy. Carter was the first "Born-Again" Christian to run for president and, like the Catholic John F. Kennedy before him, his election aroused excitement among members of his own religion. In keeping with his religious beliefs, Carter proclaimed during the campaign that he believed abortion was wrong (Patton 1977). He initially won the support of evangelicals as well as Catholics with his pro-life comments, yet he quickly disappointed on

abortion and other social issues, losing the support of both groups. Carter announced that he would not support a Constitutional amendment overturning *Roe v. Wade* (Critchlow 1999). He also backed many other social initiatives, including the Equal Rights Amendment, that were firmly opposed by conservative Christians (Hertzke 1988). The Carter administration also held the White House Conference on Families, which proved to be a huge disappointment to pro-lifers and other social conservatives. The conference was a large scale event that was actually intended to garner electoral support from Catholics and cultural conservatives (Dempsey 1981). However, both of these groups came to view the conference as an attempt to change the very definition of the family. Rumors began to swirl that the selection process had been rigged in favor of liberals. Although Carter tried to quell these fears with the inclusion of many cultural conservatives in the conference, it was too late. By the end of his term, “millions of theologically conservative Protestants concluded quite correctly that Carter was doctrinally and culturally more liberal than he had sounded in 1975” (Ribuffo 2006, 16).

Jimmy Carter miscalculated the deep dissatisfaction that American evangelicals had with the political climate of the late 1970s and thereby facilitated the polarization of the electorate on the abortion issue (Hastey 1981). Wald observes, “[O]f all the shifts and surprises in contemporary political life, perhaps none was so wholly unexpected as the political resurgence of evangelical Protestantism in the 1970s” (1987, 182). Carter had stimulated participation by evangelicals, and then rejected their most important issues.

Oldfield observed, [I]n the early to mid-1970s, the partisan identity of the evangelical constituency was open to question...Yet, by the late 1970s, and into the 1980s, as the Christian Right organized a segment of this constituency, its members were developing increasingly strong ties to the Republican Party” (1996, 102). Evangelical pro-lifers were looking for a conservative candidate who was opposed to abortion. They found one in Ronald Reagan.

### **It’s a Whole New Ballgame: Enter the Christian Right (1980 – 1991)**

In the 1980s, evangelicals established themselves as a significant voting block within the Republican Party, and the Republican Party became the home party of the pro-life movement through tactical political maneuvering.

Evangelicals were deliberately courted by the Republican Party in general and Ronald Reagan in particular. This was also a period of intense pro-life SMIG activity. These SMIGs dealt exclusively with the Republican Party. The Moral Majority, founded in 1979, exerted its political muscle throughout the 1980s, and other pro-life/Christian right SMIGs also emerged. During this time, the pro-life movement was subsumed into the Christian Right Movement and evangelical multi-issue groups like the Moral Majority become the most prominent pro-life SMIGs.

Several conservative operatives created the Moral Majority as a calculated political strategy to entice Catholics to leave the Democratic Party and to mobilize Evangelicals into politics. The Moral Majority was founded in 1979 by Richard Viguerie (the direct mail guru), Paul Weyrich (Committee for

the Survival of a Free Congress), Howard Phillips (Conservative Caucus) and Terry Dolan (National Conservative Political Action Committee). These men strategized to use the abortion issue to the advantage of the Republican Party. As Weyrich remarked, “[T]he New Right is looking for issues that people care about and social issues, at least for the present, fit the bill” (Lienesch 1982, 412). Ironically, the founders were not evangelicals themselves, even though they placed one at the helm of the new organization.<sup>3</sup> Jerry Falwell, a Baptist minister from Virginia, devoted to the pro-life cause, was asked to lead the new organization (Hull and Hoffer 2001). The Moral Majority immediately established a close partnership with the Republican Party and became a potent political force in national politics. Falwell reached conservative Christians through direct mail, a radio show, and newsletters. He invited conservative Christians into public service by convincing them that it was their religious obligation to vote and participate in politics. This was no small feat since evangelical Protestant philosophy traditionally frowned upon political engagement. Conservative Christians had viewed political pursuits as a distraction from their relationship with God and the attainment of salvation (Fitzgerald 1981; Reichley 1986). Historically, evangelical Christians had been slow to mobilize politically and only did so in direct response to serious threats to their beliefs (ex. Scopes Trial). In this regard, the Moral Majority was a critical step in the political development of the Christian Right and the pro-life movement.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Viguerie was Roman Catholic, Paul Weyrich was an Eastern Rite Catholic, and Howard Phillips was Jewish (Oldfield 1996).

Falwell preached politics from the pulpit and encouraged other religious leaders to do the same. His stance represented a complete reversal of his earlier advice to Christians to stay out of politics (Lienesch 1982). He explained the shift as a response forced upon him by new political circumstances,

I never thought the government would go so far a field, I never thought the politicians would become so untrustworthy, I never thought the courts would go so nuts to the left, and I misjudged the quality of government that we have. Our lack of involvement is probably one of the reasons why the country's in the mess it is in. We have defaulted by failing to show up for the fight (Martin 1996, 202).

Just as Christians were earlier advised to stay out of politics, it now became their Christian obligation to get involved.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1980 presidential election, members of the Christian Right, deeply disappointed with their born-again brother Jimmy Carter, shifted their allegiance to the Republican Party (Black and Black 2002; Joffe 2005). Seeking a candidate who shared their views on issues like the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, gay rights and communism, evangelicals found their man in Ronald Reagan, former Governor of California. Reagan was instrumental in incorporating the Christian Right into the Republican Party. He openly courted evangelicals (which was a break with the party's past). As one policy expert noted, "[T]he Republican Party didn't court pro-lifers until Reagan" (Schwartz interview). Moreover, Reagan's outspoken pro-life position made abortion an issue that both political parties had to address. The 1980 national political party platforms illustrated the increasing polarization over the issue of abortion. Both

<sup>4</sup> This view was not exclusive to Falwell and the Moral Majority but rather a new view of Christian politics. This philosophy is echoed in Francis Schaeffer's highly influential book, *Christian Manifesto* published in 1981.

political parties were clear and explicit about their diverging positions (Oldfield 1996).

The 1980 National Democratic Party platform renewed its support of *Roe v. Wade* and opposed funding restrictions on abortion: “[W]e fully recognize the religious and ethical concerns which many Americans have about abortion. We also recognize the belief of many Americans that a woman has a right to choose whether and when to have a child. The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion rights as the law of the land and opposes any Constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision.” The platform also emphasized women’s rights: “[T]he Democratic Party recognizes reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right” (Democratic National Committee 1980).

Even with a solidly pro-life candidate, the Republican Party was still deeply divided over the issue of abortion in 1980. The platform’s position statement first acknowledged that many Republicans did not share a pro-life position: “[W]e recognize differing views on this question among Americans in general and in our own party...” However, despite these serious differences, the political party platform supported initiatives to both weaken and reverse *Roe v. Wade*. It supported a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution and opposed Supreme Court decisions that would undermine parents’ rights with regard to their pregnant minor children. Finally, the platform added, “[W]e also support the Congressional efforts to restrict the use of taxpayer’s dollars for abortion,” referring to the Hyde Amendment and efforts to challenge its constitutionality

(Republican National Committee 1980). The Hyde Amendment was passed by Congress in 1976 to block provision of abortion services and funding by the Federal government. This legislation comes up for renewal periodically and has made certain exceptions to the ban on funding. Currently, Medicaid allows for abortion funding in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the woman is in danger (National Committee for a Human Life Amendment 2007).

When Reagan defeated Carter in the 1980 Presidential election, pro-life SMIGs were energized by the prospect of a pro-life President in the White House. The National Right to Life Committee celebrated Reagan as “our first unabashedly pro-life president” (Kaplan 2005). The new president reciprocated the movement’s embrace. Reagan prioritized abortion by meeting with pro-life advocates only two days after his inauguration. He continued to engage in regular communication with Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and other evangelical political activists throughout his presidency. Reagan appointed pro-lifers to prominent administrative posts (e.g. pro-lifer C. Everett Koop to Surgeon General). James Dobson commented on the evangelical groups’ new-found status:

The 1980 election affirmed us as more than an inconsequential splinter group in American culture. In spite of the media, in spite of what everybody said, we had made a difference. Then Ronald Reagan and others recognized that we had made a difference, so we were affirmed as legitimate partners in the democratic experiment. We were invited to the table for the first time. And that was a great feeling (Martin 1996, 225).

Reagan addressed the March for Life each year he was in office, spoke before many pro-life organizations, and entertained anti-abortion leaders at the White House (Blanchard 1994). Reagan supported Orrin Hatch’s 1983 Human Life

Amendment, which would have nullified *Roe v. Wade* by establishing that the Constitution does not secure the right to abortion. He also supported the Human Life Statute (also known as the Helms-Hyde Bill), which, among other things, set out to establish that human life begins at conception. This bill would have banned taxpayer funded abortions and removed the power of the federal courts to overturn state anti-abortion laws. Neither initiative passed, but three other important measures were implemented during Reagan's administration. First, the Mexico City Policy banned aid to international family planning organizations that performed abortions overseas. Second, Reagan banned the importation of RU 486 (also known as "the abortion pill") – a drug that chemically induces abortion. Finally, Reagan banned the use of fetal tissue in medical research. Despite these successes for the pro-life SMIGs, many of the policy proposals Reagan endorsed were not implemented.

Reagan ran for re-election in 1984 against Democrat Walter Mondale. At the time, conservative Christians were defecting from the Democratic Party in droves. Other Christian conservatives were registering to vote for the first time and doing so overwhelmingly with the Republican Party (Wilcox 2000). This shift was highly significant since Christian conservatives comprised about 20% of the electorate, but only about 55% of Evangelicals were registered to vote at a time when the national average was 72% (Green 1997; Reichley 1986). The affiliation with the Republican Party made sense because "it was consistent with their opposition to the expansion of abortion rights, sexual permissiveness, secularization of education, new family structures and other examples of what

they perceived to be moral deterioration in American life – trends they associated with Democratic politics” (Guth et al. 1993, 173). The Republican Party was gaining a significant voting bloc that would reshape the party.

In addition to an electoral shift, the polarizing trend in political party platforms continued. 1984 was the first year that the Democratic platform did not include a statement acknowledging internal party differences over abortion. Instead, the Democratic Party articulated its continued support for abortion rights, the inequity of restricting government funding for abortion and opposition to the violence at abortion clinics. Democrats were particularly concerned about the prospect of Ronald Reagan appointing new Supreme Court nominees: “[T]here can be little doubt that a Supreme Court chosen by Ronald Reagan would radically restrict constitutional rights and drastically reinterpret existing laws. Today, the fundamental right of a woman to reproductive freedom rests on the votes of six members of the Supreme Court – five of whom are over 75. That right could easily disappear during a second Reagan term.” Finally, the platform asked, “If Mr. Reagan is re-elected, who would protect women and minorities against discrimination?” (Democratic National Committee 1984).

The 1984 Republican platform ceased mentioning internal differences on the abortion issue and instead stated the party’s unequivocal pro-life position. The platform restated its support for a Human Life Amendment, expansion of 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections to include the unborn, opposition to federal funding of abortion, praise of President Reagan’s judicial appointments and assertion that

judges who share a pro-life perspective be appointed. The platform added to, and strengthened, its pro-life stance by including the following: “[T]he unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed...we oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion” (Republican National Committee 1984). Both political parties clearly defined their positions and rejected those in their party who did not assume the same position on abortion.

After winning re-election, Reagan made attempts to reward pro-life SMIGs for helping return him to office. He spoke out against abortion and achieved some small victories for the pro-life cause (e.g. additional restrictions on federal funding of abortion). However, by the end of his second term, Reagan had ultimately failed to deliver on the pro-life agenda in any substantial way. The Reagan administration rationalized the lack of progress on abortion as well as other social issues as a consequence of prioritizing the economy. As a result, Reagan left office in 1988 having done very little for the constituency that helped put him in the White House. Reagan “never really put the weight of the White House behind the pro-life movement,” a representative from one pro-life SMIG argued (Schwartz interview). Political commentator E.J. Dionne observed, “[I]t is striking how much loyalty Ronald Reagan won from this constituency without delivering much to them at all...There was no school prayer amendment, no anti-abortion amendment, no school choice program” (Martin 1996, 309-310).

Following Reagan, George H.W. Bush ran for president in 1988 with an inconsistent record on abortion. He had been a supporter of abortion rights and legal contraception during his tenure as a Congressman from Texas. Bush changed his position considerably as vice president, and by the time he became a presidential candidate, he actively sought the support of pro-life interest groups. Bush courted evangelicals and they supported him despite his mixed record on abortion (Oldfield 1996). Evangelical electoral support of Bush was particularly significant since one of their own, Pat Robertson, was also running for the presidential nomination. The Robertson candidacy revealed cracks in the Christian Right movement when many of its leaders including Jerry Falwell and Tim and Beverly LaHaye failed to endorse him. The LaHayes reasoned that although Robertson might have been their first choice, they needed a candidate who could win, explaining, “[W]e wanted to support someone who we thought could get the nomination” (Oldfield 1996, 142). By 1988, conservative Christians concluded that their first priority was for the Republicans to win, not necessarily to support the strongest pro-life candidate.

The 1988 Republican Party platform was anything but brief on the subject of abortion. Most of the platform repeated earlier positions, including the “fundamental right to life” of the unborn child, support for a human life amendment, inclusion of the protection of unborn children in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, opposition to public funding for abortion and approval of Reagan’s judicial appointments. However, the platform added “[W]e oppose any programs in public schools which provide birth control or abortion services or

referrals.” It also praised and defended President Reagan’s judicial appointments and supported selection of justices based on their position on abortion (Republican National Committee 1988).

In contrast, the Democratic Party platform in 1988 was extremely brief. This was a tactical decision in response to criticisms that the Democratic Party historically pandered to special interests (Freeman 1988; Walters 1990). Democratic National Committee Chair Paul Kirk argued in a statement to the Democratic Governor’s Association that a winning platform should be “common sense for a common purpose” and also should be “brief and readable...reflect timeless truths and unifying principles” (Kirk Jr. 1987). As a result, the Democratic platform was less than 10% of the length of the 1984 platform. On the issue of abortion, it simply stated, “[T]he fundamental right of reproductive choice should be guaranteed regardless of ability to pay” (Democratic National Committee 1988).

Bush defeated Democrat Michael Dukakis with overwhelming support from evangelicals. In fact, 70-80% of white evangelicals voted for Bush (Oldfield 1996). He returned the favor by appointing two seemingly pro-life Supreme Court justices, David Souter and Clarence Thomas. Bush also communicated with the leadership in the House of Representatives, pledging his continued support for Reagan’s Mexico City Policy on international abortion providers. Bush later pledged in a letter to then-Speaker Tom Foley, “I will veto any legislation that weakens current law or existing regulations [on abortion]” (National Right to Life Committee 2007b). Additionally, Bush vetoed the

Freedom of Choice Bill, which would have made the provisions in *Roe v. Wade* statutory law. Bush clearly understood the importance of the electoral support evangelical pro-lifers had given him and reached out to this constituency at the beginning of his presidency.

Despite the evident influence of the Christian Right as a voting block, organized expressions of the movement did not necessarily fare well in the late 1980s. The Moral Majority closed its doors, done in, scholars argue, because it neglected to develop a grassroots component, operating instead as a top-down organization. It focused on garnering media attention and cultivating membership through direct mail (Hadden et al. 1987). The Moral Majority was also viewed as religiously intolerant despite the fact that many of its founders were members of the religions it criticized. Most importantly, as was the case with many new Christian Right SMIGs at the time, the Moral Majority engaged in explosive rhetoric that resonated with other evangelicals, but ultimately failed to reach (and in many cases offended or repelled) a broader audience (Rozell and Wilcox 1996).

In the wake of the Moral Majority's demise, the Christian Coalition rose to prominence, careful not to repeat the mistakes the Moral Majority had made in the 1980s. The Christian Coalition was founded by Pat Robertson out of his failed bid for the Republican presidential nomination. Although the campaign itself failed, a large corps of conservative activists was energized and seeking political involvement. Robertson developed a hefty mailing list for his new organization from his campaign supporters. The Christian Coalition quickly

became the most prominent Christian Right SMIG (Mydans 1992). Under the guidance of Robertson and Executive Director Ralph Reed, the organization grew. In contrast to the top-down nature of the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition built an effective grassroots organization to complement its strong national presence (Oldfield 1996). The Christian Coalition was careful to use more moderate and less inflammatory speech that appealed to a wider audience and recommended that their members do the same. Reed advised, “Religious conservatives must shun harsh language on critical issues – chiefly abortion, Clinton-bashing and homosexuality and learn to speak the language of our opponents with clarity” (Bennet 1996a, 1).

The Christian Coalition also focused heavily on working within the Republican Party. Ralph Reed “repeatedly stressed his willingness to moderate his group’s demands to accommodate the strategic interests of the party as a whole” (Oldfield 1996, 86). The organization became more professional and politically savvy than the Moral Majority had been. Rozell and Wilcox explain, “[T]hey became more secular...the more doctrinaire activists left politics in disgust, and those that remained became more pragmatic as they learned the rules of the game” (1996, 272-273). This philosophy adopted by the Christian Coalition would foster a close working relationship with the Republican Party.

### **Divided Government: Conservative Congress/Liberal White House (1992-1999)**

Although the 1992 Republican National Convention was an homage to the Christian Right, it failed to resonate with even mainstream Republicans and subsequently pro-lifers lost their connection with the White House when Democrat Bill Clinton was elected president. Far from diffusing pro-life SMIGs, Clinton's pro-choice position re-energized pro-lifers. The Christian Right and pro-life SMIGs became even more entrenched in their relationship with the Republican Party. This unity among conservatives helped bring about sweeping victories by the Republican Party in both the House and the Senate in the 1994 midterm elections. Additionally, even though many pro-life SMIGs criticized the Christian Coalition for its willingness to compromise with the Republican Party as they had done with the Moral Majority a decade before, the Christian Coalition became the main liaison between the Republican Party and the pro-life SMIGs.

The 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston was a pivotal event. It was both a stunning victory and a crushing defeat for the pro-life SMIGs. The convention itself leaned heavily toward the pro-life position despite the fact that many Republicans continued to hold more moderate views on abortion. Considering that only twelve years before evangelical Christians were on the fringe of the Republican Party, their center stage position in 1992 was quite remarkable. Oldfield observed, "[T]he 1992 Convention even more firmly established the link between the Christian Right and the Republican Party"

(1996, 88). Conservative Christians were highly influential in crafting a platform and agenda dominated by the abortion issue (Niebuhr 1995). The Christian Coalition worked hard to get its members selected as delegates and the Republican platform was largely a reflection of Christian Right influence (Oldfield 1996). Christian SMIG leaders took credit for victory even before the election took place. Ralph Reed commented, “[I]f George Bush wins, the evangelicals will have made the difference” (Mydans 1992, 1).

The Republican platform supported a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution, 14th Amendment protections for the unborn, adoption and other abortion alternative programs, and the appointment of pro-life justices. The platform opposed public funding of abortion both domestically and internationally. The Republican position on abortion was summed up in the following statement: “[W]e believe the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life that cannot be infringed” (Republican National Committee 1992). However, despite the pro-life exterior of the Republican Party in 1992, there continued to be a pro-choice contingent within its ranks, which fought for more inclusive language on abortion in the platform. In the end, the effort proved futile as pro-choice Republicans were literally shunned (Oldfield 1996). They even failed to get their most modest proposals on the platform, one being a statement acknowledging that there were differences within the party on abortion.

Candidate George H.W. Bush took a strong position on abortion and other conservative issues because of the presence of powerful social conservatives

in the Republican Party (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Even after the convention, Bush showed his loyalty to the Christian Right when he spoke to a gathering of ten thousand religious leaders and denounced the Democrats for leaving “three simple letters: G.O.D. out of their platform” (Oldfield 1996, 204).

Conversely, the 1992 Democratic platform supported “the right of every woman to choose...regardless of ability to pay.” The platform additionally called for “contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education.” The platform struck a slightly more moderate tone by adding, “[T]he goal of our nation must be to make abortion less necessary, not more difficult or more dangerous.” Despite this statement, the Democratic Party remained staunchly pro-choice. The Convention leaders even denied prominent Democratic pro-life Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, the opportunity to address the convention. It was the view of many pro-life activists at this time that there was no room in the Democratic Party for pro-lifers: “Democrats in the 1990s had to change their views on abortion or change parties” (Schwartz interview).

George Bush was defeated by Bill Clinton in 1992. In fact, it was the worst loss by a sitting president since William Howard Taft in 1912. Ultimately the strong position on abortion seemed to hurt Republicans, who clearly overestimated the power and appeal of the abortion issue among the rank and file (Wilcox 2000). Although conservative SMIGs and their leaders were successful in crafting the platform and the convention itself, by the 1990s it had become clear that Christian conservative leaders had to stop making

uncompromising demands on G.O.P. candidates” (Rozell and Wilcox 1996, 287). Oldfield concludes, “[M]edia reaction to the Christian Right’s role at the convention was decidedly negative. And, of course, the movement’s preferred candidate, George Bush, lost the election in November – an outcome for which the Christian Right was often blamed” (1996, 193). The 1992 election would shape the tactics of pro-life SMIGs throughout the 1990s.

Bill Clinton was the first outspoken abortion-rights supporter elected to the office of the President and he quickly enacted major changes in federal abortion policy. On Clinton’s second day as President (as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision), he issued five executive orders which resulted in sweeping changes on abortion policy. Collectively, these orders reversed the gag rule in federal family planning clinics, reversed regulations contained in Title X banning abortion referral by federal employees, negated the ban on funding for fetal tissue transplants, and asked the Federal Drug Administration to review the import ban on RU 486 that had been in place since the Reagan administration. Clinton also reversed Reagan’s Mexico City Policy, which banned federal aid to international family planning organizations. Unlike his pro-life Republican predecessors who engaged in symbolic speech but did not always follow through on their pro-life promises, Clinton spoke out for abortion rights and put the weight of the White House behind his decisions. In December, 1993, Clinton sent a letter to every state Medicaid Director ordering him/her to provide payments for abortions in cases of rape and incest. Clinton

also appointed two pro-choice justices, Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Stephen Breyer, to the Supreme Court.

The Clinton presidency and pro-choice policies re-energized the pro-life SMIGs. Ralph Reed observed, “[T]he first thing we had going for us was Bill Clinton” (Martin 1996, 329). Reed was right: the year after Clinton was elected, the Christian Coalition’s membership doubled. Many pro-life interest group representatives discussed the fact that they worked more closely during the Clinton Administration than they had previously. Clinton forced them to downplay their differences and form a united front (Saunders interview).

Pro-life SMIGs were not united in all areas, however, and their standing was threatened in the 1990s with a surge in abortion clinic violence. Dr. David Gunn, a doctor who performed abortions, was killed in Pensacola, Florida in 1993 by a radical pro-life activist. Five months later, another abortion doctor was shot in Kansas. By the end of the 1990s, another six people died and many more were injured in clinic shootings and bombings (O’Connor 1996). Operation Rescue and other radical pro-life groups were blamed for the attacks but denied involvement, insisting that they only engaged in non-violent tactics.

Ralph Reed denounced the violence on behalf of the Christian Coalition:

We must also forsake violence of the fist, tongue, or heart. For that reason, it has never been more important for us to condemn violence, especially when it originates from within our own ranks. Let me state unequivocally that we denounce and condemn the recent terrorism against abortion clinics with all that we are. When demented and deranged individuals take human life in the name of life itself, they are guilty not only of hypocrisy, but of inflicting more harm to our compassionate cause of peace and non-violence than all our foes put together (1995, 310).

Even though mainstream pro-life SMIGs denounced violence, some radical pro-life groups supported it. The American Coalition of Life Activists (ACLA) publicly condoned what they described as the “justifiable homicide” of abortion doctors (Ginsburg 1989). In response to this surge in abortion clinic violence, Congress passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act in May 1994. FACE made it a federal crime to attack or block individuals who were entering abortion clinics. The Clinton administration enforced FACE by directing Attorney General Janet Reno to assign federal marshals to abortion clinics around the country to enforce the FACE Act (Ginsburg 1989). Other groups were successfully prosecuted using federal racketeering laws to stall or shut down their more disruptive activities (Diamond 1995).

Two years into the Clinton administration’s first term, the Republicans were strategizing about how to win back Congress. Their strategy included the Contract with America, a detailed legislative plan for Congress that was supported by almost all Republican candidates in 1994. The Contract was ultimately instrumental in the sweeping Republican mid-term victory (Oldfield 1996). Pro-life SMIGs supported the Contract even though it focused on economic issues and was virtually silent on abortion. The Christian Coalition, in particular, endorsed many Republican candidates that year who were considered soft on abortion (Berke 1995b). By May 1995, the Christian Coalition drafted its own contract, the Contract with the American Family, which was meant to complement the Contract with America. Oldfield comments, “[T]he difference in emphasis between the two contracts is striking...the

contract [the Contract with America], a centerpiece of the 1994 Congressional campaign, for the most part stays clear of the social issues emphasized by the Christian Coalition” (1996, 219). However, even though the Contract with the American Family called for “restoring respect for human life,” it failed to support an outright ban on abortion, and instead focused on late term abortion (“partial birth abortion”) and public funding for abortion (Christian Coalition 1995).

By the presidential election of 1996, many Republican strategists questioned the party’s hard-line stance on abortion. Pro-choice Republicans again pushed for more inclusive language within the platform on abortion rights. The frontrunner for the presidential nomination in 1996 was Senator Bob Dole, who was a weak advocate of the pro-life cause. Dole tried desperately to downplay the abortion issue and bridge the gap between pro-life and pro-choice Republicans stating, “[I]n my view, we’re all Republicans; we’re trying to broaden the party – it seems to me we all ought to be out there discussing issues that bring us together, that increase our numbers” (Berke 1995a, 1). At the convention Dole urged: “[O]ur convention must reflect not only our strong pro-life convictions, but a decent regard for the opinions of those that disagree. This is not compromise, it is civility” (Schulte 1996). Dole fought for moderation on abortion in the platform. He supported a return to the original caveat on abortion in the 1976 Republican platform – to state that not all Republicans are pro-life (Schulte 1996). Dole also proposed a tolerance plank that would acknowledge differing views within the party on abortion. The tolerance plank was supported especially by prominent Republican pro-choice governors

including Christi Todd Whitman of New Jersey, Pete Wilson of California, George Pataki of New York, William Weld of Massachusetts and John Rowland of Connecticut.

Pro-life SMIGs were disturbed by this shift from an absolute pro-life stance and tried to convince Dole that the tolerance approach would lose him votes. James Dobson of Focus on the Family commented, "I am absolutely convinced that there is no way on earth Bob Dole is going to beat a sitting president, who is rather popular, in an economy that is going well, without every single vote that he can get from his base. And that base has historically been conservative and, for a large part, evangelical Christian" (1996). Ralph Reed stated, "[P]ro-life and pro-family voters, a third of the electorate, will not support a party that retreats from its noble and historic defense of traditional values and which has a national ticket or platform that does not share Ronald Reagan's belief in the sanctity of human life" (Berke 1995c, 1). Reed further threatened, "The Christian Coalition opposes abortion in every case except when the mother's life is in danger. We will oppose with every fiber in our being any effort to include a rape and incest exception in the pro-life plank" (Bennet 1996b, 1). Pat Robertson was also among those angered by Bob Dole's indifference to the Christian Right constituency concluding, "[W]e're not going to sit by as good soldiers and take whatever is given to us...we were not consulted on this campaign. We were peripheral" (Niebuhr 1996, 4).

The final draft of the Republican Party platform did not contain a tolerance plank. It remained unequivocally pro-life, due in large part to the

influence of the Christian Coalition, which joined other conservative forces and their leaders, including the “fearsome foursome” of Ralph Reed, Gary Bauer, Phyllis Schlafly, and Bay Buchanan (Easton 2000). The final draft read:

The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life...Bill Clinton...vetoed the ban on partial birth abortions, a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association and rightly branded as four-fifth infanticide. We applaud Bob Dole’s commitment to revoke the Clinton executive orders concerning abortion and to sign into law an end to partial birth abortions (Republican National Committee 1996).

Finally, the platform promoted abstinence by proposing, “[A]bstinence education in the home will lead to less need for birth control services and fewer abortions. We support educational initiatives to promote chastity until marriage as the expected standard of behavior” (Republican National Committee 1996).

In an act of defiance, Bob Dole made a point of stating that he had not even read the platform (Berke 1996). As the election drew closer, however, Dole made some overtures to pro-lifers. At the Christian Coalitions annual “Road to Victory” conference, Bob Dole promised: “[W]hen I get the partial-birth abortion bill, I won’t veto it, I’ll sign it” (Gray 1996, 38). In addition to influencing the platform language, pro-life SMIGs exerted their influence by threatening to withdraw support from Dole if he chose a pro-choice running mate. He did not.

As for the 1996 Democratic platform, it again reflected moderation on the abortion issue claiming that, “[T]he Democratic Party is a party of inclusion. We

respect the individual conscience of each American on this difficult issue.” It continued,

[O]ur goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous. We support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, and politics that support healthy childbearing. For four years in a row, we have increased support for family planning. The abortion rate is dropping. Now we must continue to support efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, and we call on all Americans to take personal responsibility to meet this important goal (Democratic National Committee 1996).

Remaining the party of choice, the platform also stated, “choice...we believe it is a fundamental Constitutional liberty that individual Americans – not government – can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction” (Democratic National Committee 1996).

### **A Republican, Evangelical President**

As the 2000 elections approached, George W. Bush, Governor of Texas and son of George H.W. Bush, emerged as the frontrunner for the Republican Presidential nomination to face Vice President Al Gore. As one of their own – a born-again Christian who supported most of their agenda -- Bush was the favored candidate of Conservative Christians. George W. Bush’s own position on abortion was that exceptions should be made in cases of rape, incest, and the life of the mother. However, he argued that the Republican platform should advocate a total ban on abortion as a statement of the party’s pro-life ideals (Whittle 2000). The Platform Committee concurred and rejected calls from party moderates for more inclusive language on abortion. The final draft read:

“[T]he unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution...We support the appointment of judges who respect...the sanctity of innocent human life.” The platform also addressed abstinence as the preferred method of birth control,

We renew our call for replacing “family planning” programs for teens with increased funding for abstinence education, which teaches abstinence until marriage as the responsible and expected standard of behavior. Abstinence from sexual activity is the only protection that is 100 percent effective against out-of-wedlock pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease (Republican National Committee 2000).

The platform also discussed the controversial late term abortion issue. “[T]he Supreme Court’s recent decision, prohibiting states from banning partial-birth abortions – a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association, and rightly branded as four-fifths infanticide – shocks the conscience of the nation.” Finally, the platform expanded “life issues” by including its opposition to both euthanasia and assisted suicide (Republican National Committee 2000). Pro-life SMIGs were thrilled with the platform. Gary Bauer, formerly of the Family Research Council, commented: “I was enormously pleased that the strong pro-life principle in the platform remains unchanged...Our party believes that all of our children should be welcomed into the world and protected by law” (Whittle 2000).

The Democratic national platform clearly reiterated its pro-choice stance: “[T]he Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade* and regardless of ability to pay.” It stressed the importance of this election in securing pro-choice justices to the Supreme

Court: “[T]his year’s Supreme Court rulings show to us all that eliminating a woman’s right to choose is only one justice away. That’s why the stakes in this election are as high as ever.” It reiterated its pledge to “make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous.” And it tactically included tolerance language rejected by the Republican Platform Committee four years before:

We are proud to put into our platform the very words which Republicans refused to let Bob Dole put into their 1996 platform and which they refused to even consider putting in their platform in 2000: ‘While the party remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing its historic principles and ideals, we also recognize that members of our party have deeply held and sometimes differing views on issues of personal conscience like abortion and capital punishment. We view this diversity of views as a source of strength, not as a sign of weakness, and we welcome into our ranks all Americans who may hold differing positions on these and other issues. Recognizing that tolerance is a virtue, we are committed to resolving our differences in a spirit of civility, hope and mutual respect’ (Democratic National Committee 2000).

Bush’s election was a victory for pro-life politics. After being shut out of the White House for eight years, the pro-life movement and pro-life SMIGs had a seat at the table once again. Unlike the first Bush, who avoided discussion of abortion when possible, George W. Bush explicitly, and sometimes emphatically, supported the pro-life cause. Pro-life SMIGs described the conditions under the new administration as “much more positive. Now we are able to work within the system” (Utley interview). Doug Johnson of the National Right to Life Committee remarked: “[W]e’re very happy with all the support the White House has given” (Milbank 2002). Tony Perkins, President of FRC, praised Bush by commenting: “[T]his president is more committed to the

unborn and to life in general than any President in our history, including Ronald Reagan and President Bush's own father" (Focus on the Family).

After his inauguration, Bush quickly took action to reverse many of Clinton's pro-choice policies. His policy initiatives and statements were all in line with conservative Christian philosophy. In January, 2001, he instituted a policy to withdraw U.S. funds from any international organization which offers abortion services (National Right to Life News 2001). Additionally, several significant pieces of legislation were passed during Bush's first term. Bush signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act into law in 2002 (Fagan 2002). This legislation granted personhood under federal law to all infants born alive – even those born through an abortion procedure. At the signing, President Bush stated: "A child who is born has intrinsic worth and must have the full protection of our laws....They reflect our image and are created in God's own image" (Bush 2002). Bush next signed the late term abortion ("partial birth abortion") ban in 2003 which had twice been vetoed by President Clinton. At the signing, Bush displayed the religious nature of his pro-life leanings: "[T]his right to life cannot be granted or denied by government because it does not come from government, it comes from the Creator of Life" (Bush 2003). Bush signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (also known as Laci and Connor's Law after the victims in the infamous Scott Peterson murder case). This legislation created an additional federal offense when a person, while committing a violent crime, causes the death or injury of an unborn child at any stage of development even if the attacker was unaware of the victim's pregnancy. This legislation, not

surprisingly, was vigorously supported by pro-life SMIGs (Christian Coalition 2007). Bush again appealed to conservative Christians at the signing: “Any time an expectant mother is a victim of violence, two lives are in the balance, each deserving protection and each deserving justice” (Bush 2004). Clearly, George W. Bush’s abortion policy decisions pleased the Christian Right. Additionally, “[O]n the rare occasion when he [Bush] does not narrowly hew to the hard-line pro-life position, the president takes pains to assure pro-lifers they are listened to and in the loop” (Kaplan 2005, 142; National Right to Life News 2001). Pro-life SMIGs were satisfied with President Bush’s record on abortion as reflected in one policy expert’s statement, “[T]he President has been very strong on life issues” (Henrick interview).

Four years into Bush’s presidency, the 2004 Republican national platform staked out a strong pro-life stance including many of its traditional statements: opposition to all government funding of abortion in the U.S. and internationally, opposition to partial birth abortion, promotion of a human life amendment, inclusion of the unborn as protected persons under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and support for appointment of pro-life justices. The platform lauded George W.

Bush’s record on abortion during his first term:

[W]e praise the President for his bold leadership in defense of life. We praise him for signing the Born Alive Infants Protection Act...We praise Republicans in Congress for passing with strong bipartisan support, a ban on the inhuman procedure known as partial birth abortion and we applaud President Bush for signing legislation outlawing partial birth abortion and for vigorously defending it in the courts (Republican National Committee 2004).

The platform also criticized the Supreme Court as out of step with public opinion on late term abortion: “[W]hile the vast majority of Americans support a ban on

partial birth abortion, this brutal and violent practice will likely continue by judicial fiat. We believe that the self-proclaimed supremacy of these judicial activists is antithetical to the democratic ideals on which our nation was founded.” In a new move, the Republican Party then pledged support to pregnant women: “[O]ur goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion” (Republican National Committee 2004).

In contrast, the Democratic Party slightly softened its stance on abortion. It first made many of its usual comments: “[W]e will defend the dignity of all Americans against those who would undermine it. Because we believe in the privacy and equality of women, we stand proudly for a woman’s right to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, and regardless of her ability to pay. We stand firmly against Republican efforts to undermine that right.” The Democratic Party then proposed what was a major shift in its policy on abortion: “At the same time, we strongly support family planning and adoption incentives. Abortion should be safe, legal and rare” (Democratic National Committee 2004). The Democratic Party had never mentioned common ground issues like family planning and adoption before. The Democratic Party was clearly attempting to bridge the gap between the pro-life and pro-choice camps. The Democratic side appeared to be attempting to win back pro-life voters. Howard Dean, who would later become the Democratic Party Chairman commented, “I have long

believed that we ought to make a home for pro-life Democrats” (Feuerherd 2005, 5).

## **Conclusion**

Through an examination of national party platforms and presidential politics, this chapter demonstrates that the Republican Party became the home party of the pro-life movement. The National Democratic and Republican Party platforms clearly show increasing political party polarization over the abortion issue beginning in 1980. The Republican platform became increasingly pro-life while the Democratic platform took an opposing position. Republican and Democratic presidents and presidential aspirants reflected this trend, taking stronger and more diametrically opposing stands on abortion.

As the relationship between the pro-life movement and the Republican Party solidified, the pro-life movement also became joined to the Christian Right movement. This connection was critical. The Catholic Church was no longer the main voice of the movement by 1980. In taking over the abortion issue, the Christian Right became a dominant force in the Republican Party. By the 1980s, many of the most prominent pro-life groups that emerged were evangelical, multi-issue groups that worked exclusively with the Republican Party. This development cemented the pro-life SMIGs’ relationship with the Republican Party. Pro-life SMIGs worked exclusively with the Republican Party and were accordingly shut out of the Democratic Party.

This chapter also reveals several nuances in the pro-life movement's relationship to the Republican and Democratic political parties. First, the pro-life movement's alliance with the Republican Party was not pre-determined. Both Presidents Carter and Reagan were pivotal in establishing the relationship between the pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party. In the early and mid 1970s, Catholics were predominately allied with the Democratic Party and Carter's own Christian status could have swayed evangelicals to join the Democratic Party as well. Carter's handling of the abortion issue, coupled with Reagan's courtship of evangelicals, shifted the allegiance of pro-lifers to the Republican Party.

The Republican Party platforms, as well as presidential initiatives, demonstrate the strong relationship the party had (and has) with the pro-life movement. The detailed legislative initiatives contained in each Republican platform mirror those of the pro-life SMIGs. Despite small differences, the Republican Party reflects a strong commitment to a pro-life strategy.

## **CHAPTER THREE - PRO-LIFE INTEREST GROUPS AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY**

Chapter Two established that the Republican Party became the home party for pro-life social movement interest groups. This chapter explores the implications of that relationship for contemporary pro-life SMIGs. Specifically, I examine whether pro-life SMIGs are constrained in the policymaking process because of their attachments to both the home party and the broader pro-life movement. Further, I explore the extent to which pro-life SMIGs are compelled to compromise with the Republican Party. I ask why some SMIGs are more successful than others in the pro-life policymaking process, and what role resources and the home party relationship play in that success.

This chapter begins with an overview of the most influential pro-life SMIGs (“the players”). I will explore differences in philosophy and the range of issues that each of these groups addresses. One of the biggest distinctions among pro-life SMIGs is their level of willingness to compromise with the home party, which affects both their relationship with the broader movement, as well as the other pro-life SMIGs. Next, I will explore the access pro-life SMIGs have to the Republican Party, particularly through legislative service organizations. I will examine the resources that pro-life SMIGs can leverage in their relationship with the home party, within the policymaking process. Finally, I will examine the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act. This is a

case in which pro-life SMIGs successfully blocked the inclusion of an unfavorable amendment through the use of their resources.

### **The Players**

In the course of my interviews with academics, lawmakers and members of pro-life SMIGs, the following groups were repeatedly referred to as the most influential in the national pro-life policymaking arena. These groups are either single-issue groups focused on abortion or multi-issue groups that place abortion high on their agenda. Multi-issue groups tend to be Christian Right groups that also address issues like homosexuality, school prayer and sexual education. Most of the groups do not work together formally, although they do occasionally form temporary coalitions. The pro-life SMIGs included in this study are<sup>1</sup>:

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- The Eagle Forum
- The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC)
- Focus on the Family (FOF)
- Concerned Women for America (CWA)
- The Family Research Council (FRC)
- Feminists for Life (FFL)
- The Christian Coalition (CC)
- Priests for Life (PFL)

<sup>1</sup> These groups are presented in the order in which they were founded.

- Democrats for Life (DFL)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – Family Life Division, as discussed in Chapter Two, was created in response to *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), when the church realized that the courts were headed in a more liberal direction on reproductive issues. This group was a first responder in the nascent pro-life movement. USCCB's position on abortion is as follows:

Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral; its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us give urgent attention and priority to this issue of justice (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2007a).

USCCB's approach to the abortion issue is four-pronged and includes public information and education, pastoral care, public policy, and prayer and worship (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2007a).

The Eagle Forum was founded in 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly specifically to oppose the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. When *Roe v. Wade* was decided a year later, Eagle Forum quickly took on the abortion issue. Schlafly comments, “[C]onstitutional government and moral decency require that *Roe v. Wade* be overturned” (Schlafly 1998). Eagle Forum is an overtly partisan organization that is closely linked with the Republican Party. In fact, part of Eagle Forum's mission is to maintain the Republican Party as a pro-life party. In 2000, Eagle Forum had revenues of \$2.3 million, 80,000 members, 30 state chapters nationwide and a staff of eight (People for the American Way 2007b).

Phyllis Schlafly also founded the Republican National Coalition for Life in 1990 as an offshoot of the Eagle Forum. RNC/Life's goals are to "work to hold Republican lawmakers accountable to the pro-life principles in our platform. It is our desire to see those principles translated into public policy and law. Further, we encourage Republican Party officials to enthusiastically support pro-life candidates and policies consistent with our platform" (Republican National Coalition for Life 2007a). RNC/Life is particularly opposed to the inclusion of tolerance language on abortion in the Republican platform: "[W]e cannot and must not adopt any language indicating that we are 'tolerant' about the killing of unborn babies or that we are retreating from the principled pro-life position that has brought millions of voters to the Republican Party" (Republican National Coalition for Life 2007b).

The National Right to Life Committee was founded in 1973 by the USCCB as a direct response to *Roe v. Wade*. Despite that connection with USCCB, NRLC is not a Catholic organization. In fact, part of NRLC's mission is "to be non-sectarian and non-partisan" (National Right to Life Committee 2007a). NRLC describes itself as a "single-issue" organization, limiting its agenda only to abortion. It refuses to take a position on issues that other groups call "life issues" like birth control, capital punishment and stem cell research. Doug Johnson, NRLC's top lobbyist states, "[I]t's NRLC's 'single issue' policy which permits it to represent, and work effectively with individuals who agree on little except the right-to-life issues" (1984, 6). NRLC believes that "[I]f we lost sight of our ultimate purpose, our cause suffers...[W]e are neither the New Right nor

the Old Right, nor the official Roman Catholic Church, nor fundamentalist sect; not Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, black or white. We are committed to the sacredness of human life and proud of that fact” (National Right to Life Committee News). NRLC’s mission reads: “the ultimate goal of the National Right to Life Committee is to restore legal protection to innocent human life” (National Right to Life Committee 2007a). Therefore, NRLC’s primary goal is the passage of a Constitutional Amendment banning abortion.

Focus on the Family was founded in 1977 by James Dobson, who still leads the organization. A multi-issue organization, FOF’s mission is “to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in disseminating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, and, specifically, to accomplish that objective by helping to preserve traditional values and the institution of the family” (Focus on the Family 2007). In its “guiding principles” FOF describes its position on abortion: “[W]e believe that all human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions, including the unborn” (Focus on the Family 2007). Focus on the Family has an enormous operation that dwarfs the other pro-life SMIGs in funding, manpower, and exposure. In 2000, FOF’s budget was \$128 million; it had 1,300 employees and 2.3 million subscribers to its 10 different magazines. Additionally, Dobson’s radio show is broadcast in 15 different languages around the world (People for the American Way 2007c). Dobson also can be seen on 80 different television stations daily (Diamond 1994). Unlike the other groups in this study, FOF has a significant international presence in addition to its strong national presence.

Concerned Women for America was founded in 1979 by Beverly LaHaye, who remains its leader. It is an evangelical organization whose mission is “to protect and promote Biblical values among all citizens – first through prayer, then action, and finally by influencing our society – thereby reversing the decline in moral values in our nation” (Concerned Women for America 2007). Concerned Women for America is a multi-issue organization focusing on definition of the family, pornography, education, religious liberty and national sovereignty. Among the national pro-life groups, Concerned Women for America has a reputation as more purist and less compromising than the other pro-life SMIGs. According to Clyde Wilcox, Professor of Government at Georgetown University, CWA is “very strong and they do not compromise on their issues” (2003).

The Family Research Council was founded in 1983 as the research arm and think tank of Focus on the Family. The idea of FRC was conceived by James Dobson and other Focus on the Family executives several years before at President Carter’s White House Conference on the Family (Crippen interview). Christian Conservatives decided that they needed a research-based organization located in Washington D.C. to “drive the national debate on family issues” (Family Research Council 2007). Although FRC is a multi-issue organization, its main focus is abortion. “[S]anctity of human life is the number one issue and always has been” (Crippen interview). This position is grounded in evangelical Christian beliefs as its website illustrates: “God exists and is sovereign over all creation. He created human beings in his image. Human life

is, therefore, sacred and the right to life is the most fundamental of political rights”<sup>2</sup> (Family Research Council 2007).

FRC was a relatively small organization until Gary Bauer, a former Reagan administration advisor, took the helm in 1988. Bauer transformed FRC into a high-profile advocacy organization. By 2000, FRC’s assets topped \$10 million, it had a staff of 120 and it claimed to have 455,000 members (People for the American Way 2007c). FRC and Focus on the Family remained legally connected until the early 1990s, when the organizations separated. This division enabled FRC to lobby without risking Focus on the Family’s tax exempt status (Diamond 1994). Even so, the two organizations remain close and continue to work together informally (Mackey interview).

Feminists for Life of America was founded in 1985 by Dr. Elise Rose after she had attempted to speak at a National Organization for Women (NOW) conference. Rose began her speech with the following: “I am here representing another feminist view...I’m a pro-life feminist” (Gallagher 1987, 37). She was promptly silenced by conference officials.<sup>3</sup> FFL challenges the assumed connection between feminism and a pro-choice position on abortion. FFL is not a partisan organization but its policy agenda tends to appeal to Democrats more than Republicans. However, many on the left reject FFL for its pro-life position. The view of Jennifer Brown, head of the New York City

<sup>2</sup> The other core principles listed on the website are: “life and love are inextricably linked and find their natural expression in the institutions of marriage and the family; government has a duty to promote and protect marriage and family in law and public policy; the American system of law and justice was founded on the Judeo-Christian ethic; American democracy depends upon a vibrant civil society composed of families, churches, schools, and voluntary associations.” (Family Research Council 2007).

chapter of NOW, is typical of the relationship between the feminist and abortion issues: “[A] pro-life feminist is a contradiction in terms. It’s not possible to be a feminist and anti-abortion. We regard pro-life feminism as a public relations ploy by the anti-abortion movement” (Gallagher 1987, 38). FFL “recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion” (Feminists for Life 2007).

The Christian Coalition was founded in 1989 by Pat Robertson on the heels of his unsuccessful bid for the Republican Presidential nomination. The Christian Coalition’s mission includes “protecting innocent human life,” and virtually half of the organization’s issues relate to abortion (Christian Coalition of America 2007). Pat Robertson and, especially, Ralph Reed quickly brought the Christian Coalition to a level of prominence among Christian right groups. However, since Reed’s exit and troubles with the IRS in the late 1990s, the Christian Coalition has declined in size. Its biggest financial year was 1996 when contributions topped \$26 million, but by 2000, that number had sharply declined to \$3 million (People for the American Way 2007a). Despite its decline, the Christian Coalition remains a major lobbying force in Washington. One of the Christian Coalition’s most potent weapons is its voter guide. During the 2000 election season, the Christian Coalition claimed that it distributed 70 million guides to members and conservative churches in every state (Christian Coalition of America 2007). The Christian Coalition also seeks to influence the agenda of the Republican Party through grassroots activity and training, and

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<sup>3</sup> NOW, along with most feminist groups, maintains a strict pro-choice position.

electing pro-family Christian candidates to public office. The CC claims a membership of about two million but independent estimates place it at 300,000-400,000 members.

Priests for Life (PFL) was founded in 1993 by Father Frank Pavone. Based in Staten Island, New York, PFL has a membership of over 10,000 priests nationwide. Priests for Life provide assistance to priests, and others “interested in advancing the cause of the protection of human life” (Priests for Life 2007b). Priests for Life believe there is tremendous untapped potential for the pro-life cause within the Catholic Church: “Imagine the vast structure of the Catholic Church. In the United States alone, we have over 19,000 parishes, 9,000 schools, and 50,000 priests. If those priests can infuse that vast structure with clear, vigorous, and compassionate pro-life teaching and action, things would be vastly different” (Priests for Life 2007c). PFL’s mission is to help priests to assist the laity in the Catholic Church to respond to abortion and euthanasia (Lefevere 2004). Father Pavone in particular was repeatedly mentioned in my interviews as a powerful force in pro-life politics. He was described by one insider as “one of the most articulate people I know” (Scheidler interview). Additionally, Priests for Life, and Pavone in particular, have strong connections with the other pro-life SMIGs. Pavone works with James Dobson in his Focus on the Family Institute and was awarded the Proudly Pro-Life Award, the highest award given by the National Right to Life Committee. Priests for Life have a full time staff of 42 people and its 2003 budget was over \$5 million (Priests for Life 2007a).

Democrats for Life was founded to serve pro-life members of the Democratic Party. DFL's mission is to "foster respect for life, from the beginning of life to natural death. This includes, but is not limited to, opposition to abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia" (Democrats for Life of America 2007). DFL tries to make inroads into the Democratic Party because it believes that the pro-choice stance is antithetical to Democratic Party philosophy. It argues that the Democratic Party is traditionally the party of the "underdog and the underserved" which includes the unborn child, according to DFL. Opposition to abortion should then be part of the Democratic Party's philosophy (Utley interview). DFL's main function is "getting practical legislation through and reducing abortion." It cautions that it is "not out to overturn *Roe v. Wade* but to make it obsolete" (Utley interview). DFL strives to achieve its goals by attempting to "elect pro-life Democrats to office, support pro-life Democrats while in an elected position, promote a pro-life plank in the Democratic Party platform, achieve pro-life legislation with the help of national and state pro-life Democrats, and participate actively in Democratic Party functions and offices" (Democrats for Life of America 2007). These are ambitious goals for a political party that has traditionally rejected the pro-life issue. Nevertheless, DFL's assistant director asserts: "There is a potential for changing the course of this issue...we are hoping the Democrats can take this issue back" (Utley interview).

## Group Differences

The pro-life players are far from a homogenous group. They vary substantially by size, budget, issues, and overall political philosophy. Abortion itself is a complicated and multi-faceted issue -- one that encompasses several different areas. Which facets are highlighted depends on the philosophy of the group. Some groups subscribe to a “consistent life” or “seamless garment” philosophy, which includes opposition to the death penalty as part of a pro-life agenda. Other groups -- Christian Right groups in particular -- view abortion as part of a larger policy area which includes, euthanasia, assisted suicide, cloning, and stem cell research, but does not include opposition to the death penalty. Finally, the groups are also divided by moral issues like contraception and sex education. Some, like the National Right to Life Committee, refuse to address these issues at all, and the rest are divided between those that oppose or support these measures as part of a pro-life strategy.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Democrats for Life and Feminists for Life all subscribe to the consistent life philosophy (also known as the seamless garment ethic) which advocates for the protection of all life from the unborn to criminals on death row. This view stems from a Catholic belief, but is not exclusive to Catholic groups. The seamless garment ethic is “a distinctive moral theory protecting human life from conception until natural death” (Doerflinger interview). Groups that espouse a consistent life ethic oppose abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty because they believe that “life is valuable at all its stages” (Utley interview). Supporters point out that this

position is most critically tested in “how we treat those who do not respect the lives of others – we believe in a message of mercy for the sinner” (Doerflinger interview). The USCCB holds that, “[S]tate sanctioned killing affects us all because it diminishes the value we place on all human life. Capital punishment also cuts short the guilty person’s opportunity for spiritual conversion and repentance” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2007c). Consistent life followers believe that ending life before birth or any time before natural death results in diminishing the value and respect for all life. The late Pope John Paul II’s statement in *The Gospel of Life* captures this view: “It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2007b). However, even adherents to a consistent life philosophy have their differences. While the USCCB is aligned with the Democrats for Life and the Feminists for Life in opposition to the death penalty, they are on opposing sides of other moral issues like contraception and sex education. DFL and FFL both support birth control and sexual education as part of their strategy to reduce unwanted pregnancies.

The consistent life view sets these pro-life SMIGs apart from the multi-issue Christian Right SMIGs that place opposition to abortion as their primary goal but are not opposed to the death penalty. Jim Backlin of Christian Coalition states, “Abortion is the number one issue for the Christian Coalition as well as the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for American and Focus on the

Family” (Backlin interview). Christian Right SMIGs do not support the protection of criminals with the same vigilance as they do for the unborn. All the evangelical groups in this study, support the use of the death penalty as a punishment for those convicted of murder. These groups distinguish between the innocent unborn child and those who they believe have relinquished their rights based on behavior. They assert that “it is innocent life that is to be protected” (Mackey interview). Additionally, these groups take on a number of other issues that they often refer to as “family issues.” Family issues include homosexuality, preservation of the family, and school prayer. These Christian Right issues are generally not addressed by the other pro-life groups, however; “Sanctity of human life is the number one issue and always has been” (Crippen interview).

Other groups take a more purist approach to the abortion issue – refusing to take a position on what they consider ancillary issues. The National Right to Life Committee declines to take a position on the death penalty as well as contraception and family planning. NRLC argues that position-taking on these issues would alienate some of its supporters: “[I]f we want to have the maximum impact, the biggest impact, then we stick to the basic issues and not the moral components of it. This organization has never taken a position on contraception and sex education” (Landrum interview).

Another major point of difference between the pro-life groups is the origin of their pro-life philosophy. Although a pro-life position is considered conservative, it can stem from either economic or social conservatism. The roots of a pro-life

SMIG's philosophy (social or fiscal) has a tremendous impact on its policy agenda and can occasionally put the organizations on opposite sides of legislation.<sup>4</sup> Both types of conservatives agree on the goal of reducing or eliminating abortion, but often disagree on the tactics through which they will accomplish that goal. Fiscal conservatives are pro-life but also oppose creating or expanding social programs ("growing government"), whereas social conservatives are pro-life but tend to support creating or expanding social programs targeted at reducing abortion. The USCCB, Democrats for Life and Feminists for Life are all social conservatives. Democrats for Life, in particular, does not agree with the approach that the Republican Party is taking in its fight against abortion, stating that; "The Republicans are not getting it done" (Utley interview). The implication is that although the Republican Party opposes abortion, its policy alternatives are not practical. As its name suggests, Democrats for Life address the abortion issue with typically Democratic policies, and subsequently DFL's policy initiatives have gained few supporters among fiscally conservative SMIGs. A policy analyst at the Family Research Council described DFL's policy proposals on abortion as "perfectly ridiculous" and concluded, "No, we won't be behind that one" (Mackey interview).

### **The Movement vs. the Home Party**

*We must say to the Republicans: We do not support every piece of garbage you send our way – Paul Weyrich (quoted in Conn 1994, 8).*

<sup>4</sup> Later in this chapter I will discuss the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act which was supported by fiscal conservatives and opposed by social conservatives.

SMIGs are pulled by the high ideals of the movement on one side and the realities of the policymaking process on the other. Typical interest groups must gain entry to the party and the policy-making process, but they are not answerable to a larger movement in the way that SMIGs are. To pass legislation in Washington, all interest groups must be willing to engage in compromise. However, SMIGs that do what is necessary to insert themselves into the legislative process and gain regular access to legislators are often criticized by other pro-life groups and their members for compromising the broader movement's principles to achieve legislative success.

As discussed in Chapter One, the movement shifts into a latent phase after it institutionalizes into SMIGs. Although the social movement literature holds that the movement wanes or disappears at that point (Offe 1985; Tarrow 1994), this study reveals that, according to the SMIGs as well as legislators and policy professionals, the movement still exists in a latent phase as a loose network of pro-life SMIGs. This network polices itself to ensure adherence to a set of overarching principles as well as dictating the policy agenda. The memory of the movement and the influence it once held is present for lawmakers and SMIGs. Both are aware that the movement continues to hold a threat potential in its ability to activate a corps of activists at short notice (Kitschelt 1993).

Throughout my interviews with members of pro-life SMIGs, virtually every interviewee mentioned the movement and discussed its impact on his/her

organization. In addition to the SMIGs constituting the movement on the national level, these interviews revealed that movement activity (particularly grassroots mobilization) continues to take place on the state and especially local levels. The national-level SMIGs view themselves as representatives of a larger mass constituency. Randall Terry of Operation Rescue described the tension between the movement and the political process and concluded, "I have a duty to the movement" (Terry interview). Jim Backlin of Christian Coalition says there is still a movement "in the states, in the March for Life, and at the grassroots" (Backlin interview). Danielle Doanne of the Heritage Foundation concurred stating, "The strength of the movement is in the grassroots" (Doanne interview). Alan Crippen of the Family Research Council described its activities as being part of a "pro-family movement" (Crippen interview). Clearly, for pro-life SMIGs, the movement still exists, though it has transformed and become mostly a set of principles from which the SMIGs may not stray too far.

Compromise is the defining feature determining the relationship that pro-life SMIGs have with the movement, on the one hand, and the Republican Party, on the other. The SMIGs police each other in the name of that constituency. Joe Landrum of the National Right to Life Coalition stated, "There is a tug between the movement and Congress...it is something that we have to deal with" (Landrum interview). SMIGs labor to master this delicate balancing act, yet they are often forced to choose between the two since it seems virtually impossible to please both. Oldfield states, "Christian Right activists are often faced with a difficult choice: approaches tailored to gain outside support versus

those that uphold the core religious doctrines that motivate its members” (1996, 31). As a result, the groups that are closest to the movement are often not as close to the Republican Party and vice versa.

During the 1980s, the Moral Majority was the pro-life SMIG that was closest to the Republican Party. The Republicans were indebted to the Moral Majority, which claimed to have registered several million (Republican) voters between 1980 and 1985. However, the other pro-life SMIGs criticized the Moral Majority for becoming too close to the Republican Party, and President Reagan in particular. James Dobson, head of Focus on the Family, discussed the Moral Majority’s shift away from its conservative ideology toward a more pragmatic political approach:

If you choose to be a prophet, you don’t have a lot of influence on the political reality, but you’re always free to speak what you perceive to be the truth for the current historical moment. Or you can be an advisor with a sense of truth, a sense of value, but your objective is simply to influence the process. I think the Moral Majority moved from a prophetic role into more of an advisor role and lost some of its ability to speak against the administration (Martin 1996).

This type of criticism is typical of the more movement-aligned pro-life SMIGs.

In the 1990s, the Christian Coalition and especially its leaders, Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed, enjoyed the closest pro-life SMIG relationship with the GOP. One scholar described Ralph Reed as particularly successful because “he’s a good politician, which means he understands compromise...that put him at odds with some of his constituency who aren’t interested in compromise” (Seelye 1997). Another observed; “The Christian Coalition argues the case for pragmatism, for supporting all GOP candidates

because the party is more likely to pass legislation favorable to the movement” (Wilcox 2000). Reed himself emphasizes, “[T]he important point is that the Republican Party is not a church. Its purpose is not to propagate the gospel. Its purpose is to win votes and win elections” (Verhovek 1996, 1). In 1994, many of the Republican candidates endorsed by the Christian Coalition were not 100% pro-life (Berke 1995c). Then when Bob Dole ran for president in 1996, he attempted to temper the Republican position on abortion. Although many pro-life SMIGs refused to support Dole, the Christian Coalition did. Reed consistently tried to position the Christian Coalition away from extreme proposals toward moderate ones that would be palatable to the Republican Party (Easton 2000). In response to Dole’s attempts to moderate the Republican Party’s pro-life plank, Reed responded, “We do not favor rape and incest exceptions, but we would reluctantly allow for it if it became absolutely necessary to pass a pro-life law” (Bennet 1996a, 1). The Christian Coalition was then heavily criticized by the other pro-life SMIGs (Goodstein 1995).

The National Right to Life Committee is another pro-life SMIG that has maintained a good working relationship with the Republican Party. One Republican Party insider and pro-life activist observed; “It really has a partnership...the relationship is very close between the NRLC and the Republican Party” (Schwartz interview). He added that NRLC “is the group that Republican politicians listen to. They are the establishment. They have a relationship with the Republicans and have become increasingly an appendage of the Republican Party...their legislative agenda tends to become that of the

Republican Party” (Schwartz interview). The president of the Republican Study Committee, described NRLC as having “real power” because they “know all the people” and are “great lobbyists” (Cole interview). NRLC’s success is at least partially attributable to its highly respected chief lobbyist, Doug Johnson.

Johnson is considered “one of the most effective lobbyists on the Hill” (Doerflinger interview). NRLC is unabashedly willing to compromise. NRLC describes its strategies as “we do what we can...we all share the ultimate goal but it is more a question of tactics and strategy...we compromise if we can gain a step” (Landrum interview).

This close relationship with the Republican Party and willingness to compromise comes at a price for NRLC. For example, when the Hyde Amendment was up for renewal during the Clinton presidency, Clinton threatened to veto if it did not include an exception for cases of rape and incest. Previous versions of the Hyde Amendment from the early 1980s onward had no such exception and most pro-life SMIGs wanted the legislation to remain the same. However, NRLC “encouraged people to vote for it so that it could pass” (Landrum interview). Other SMIGs viewed this concession as a defeat and NRLC reports that it received a lot of criticism for it. NRLC also takes a compromising approach when it endorses candidates, agreeing to support those who are not completely pro-life – especially if the challenger’s position is weaker on the issue. “We have given support to candidates that aren’t 100%. NRLC is willing to work for limited measures” (Landrum interview).

Priests for Life is another pro-life SMIG that supports compromise over opting out of the political process. Father Frank Pavone urges:

As Election Day draws near we are aware that some people are in a moral quandary and think that no candidate is worthy of their support. Some are even inclined not to vote at all. In our role as teachers of morality, we would like to clarify that while we can never choose between two evils, we can choose to do good to limit an evil. When one's choice of candidates who have a viable opportunity to win is limited to two unfavorable candidates, to choose to limit evil by voting for the better of the two is to choose a good. To vote for an imperfect candidate is not to endorse that candidate's position on every issue. Nor is it to compromise our ultimate goal which is the protection of all pre-born children (2007).

In contrast to groups willing to compromise, the conscience of the movement from the early 1990s forward has been the Family Research Council. FRC has the strength and influence to enable it to place demands on the Republican Party. FRC has consistently remained critical of the GOP – acting as a watchdog that warns the other SMIGs not to sacrifice too many of the movement's core principles. The Family Research Council has traditionally been unforgiving on the abortion issue with candidates who wanted its support. FRC asks candidates for their positions on issues like Supreme Court nominees, Vice Presidential running mates and their policy agenda on abortion. In 1988, for example, then-president Gary Bauer fought for a resolution that called for the Republican National Committee to withhold money from any candidate who would not support a ban on partial birth abortion. Ultimately, the measure was not successful. Rozell and Wilcox point out, “[T]he GOP controversy over late term abortions was unprecedented: for the Republican Party even to consider withholding funding from candidates who failed to take a

specific position on a divisive public issue is a vivid demonstration of the power of interest group politics in the internal life of American political parties” (1997). Bauer was successful in June 1995, however, in the fight to end the nomination of pro-choice Dr. Henry W. Foster, Jr. to the post of Surgeon General. That uncompromising position continued when Ken Connor replaced Bauer as President. He threatened: “[M]ake no mistake about it; we at FRC remain in the business of defending unborn children. If Mr. Bush is faithful to his campaign pledges, FRC will praise him. To the extent that he is not, we will be critical” (Connor 2001). This position is reiterated by most of the policy experts at FRC who boast about their unwillingness to compromise with their home party. The following responses were typical:

-We’re not going to compromise – in fact, they have to persuade us (Saunders interview).

-Because we are not a political body, we don’t have to compromise (Henrick interview).

-Politicians have to get 51% of the vote – we don’t. Our role is to present the pure vision of how things ought to be (Sprigg interview).

-We would cringe at being called the arm of the Republican Party (Crippen interview).

-We do not want to become a wing of the Republican Party (Haskew interview).

Overall, the relationship between FRC and the Party is described as a “love/hate relationship because we don’t do what they want us to do. We put principle ahead of the relationship with the Republican Party” (Saunders interview). Despite these strong words, however, FRC works within the Republican Party most of the time because, as one FRC policy analyst noted, “[W]e have more friends there.” He quickly added, “We are very happy to work with anyone who affirms the sanctity of life” (Crippen interview).

Focus on the Family seems most adamant about pro-life (and pro-family) positions, and its budget, manpower and media access give it the ability to place serious demands on the Republican Party. While FRC tends to be critical of the Republican party, it also has enough power that the party is compelled to listen. James Dobson was repeatedly mentioned in interviews as extremely influential in the Republican Party. According to one Washington insider, “[T]he Bush administration courts him...he is the most influential person in the conservative movement” (Schwartz interview). Yet Dobson is often critical of the party – making statements such as, “[D]oes the Republican Party want our votes, no strings attached, to court us every two years, and then say, ‘Don’t call me; I’ll call you’ ... Is this the way it’s going to be? If it is, I’m gone, and if I go, I will do everything I can to take as many people with me as possible” (Washington Times, 1998). In a letter to then-chairman of the Republican National Committee, Haley Barbour, in 1995 detailing his dissatisfaction with the party’s position on abortion and threatening a massive reaction by Focus on the Family and other pro-life SMIGs, James Dobson wrote:

As promised, I'm doing everything I can to alert the Christian community to the dangers implicit in the 'big tent' you are busily constructing. The attached letters are being sent this week to 2 million Focus on the Family constituents, to 8,000 political leaders, to 1,500 members of the press, to 112,000 pastors and to 100,000 church members. Millions of listeners have already heard the same message on our radio program, and we are planning other broadcasts on this topic. If that doesn't change some hearts and minds at RNC, then we'll launch a second, third and fourth wave to generate support. We must not let you abandon the unborn child and deprive pro-family citizens of a political alternative....I think you should warn the Republican presidential hopefuls that it will be impossible to skirt the moral issues in 1996. They may choose to waffle on the things that matter most, and indeed, several have already done that. But they will not be able to double-talk, side step, obfuscate and ignore the concerns that burn within our hearts. You have my word on that (Dobson 1995).

Dobson then continued by claiming that Republican victories were a direct result of evangelical support:

Republicans owe their current political power to those who are concerned about the moral poverty of this nation. More than 43 percent of your votes in November came from people who identified themselves as evangelical Christians, most of whom are decidedly pro-life. You could not have won the House and the Senate without them, and you know that is true (Dobson 1995).

The Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council often clash over abortion, with the Christian Coalition being more willing to compromise with the GOP. In 1995, for example, one of the leading contenders for the Republican ticket was General Colin Powell. Although many conservative groups embraced the possibility of Powell running for President, the Family Research Council did not. Gary Bauer of FRC would not support Powell because of his support of abortion rights among other issues (Apple 1995). Conversely, the pragmatic Ralph Reed argued for Powell's candidacy since he agreed with the Christian Right on issues like traditional family values and school choice. The

Family Research Council's opinion of the Christian Coalition is that it is "too oriented to electoral politics and gaining political influence" (Sprigg interview). Groups like the Christian Coalition that are willing to compromise movement goals are not only criticized by other pro-life SMIGs but by their own members as well. The chief lobbyist of the Christian Coalition admits that its membership has been critical of its positions: "The Christian Coalition membership is unaware of how tough it is to pass legislation in D.C. but the membership will eventually realize that all the little things are adding up" (Backlin interview).

### **Access**

This research has also revealed that pro-life SMIGs primarily work with the Republican Party in Congress and are generally denied access by the Democratic Party. According to interviews with pro-life SMIGs and Republican legislators, pro-life SMIGs enjoy extensive access to the Republican Party. One policy analyst notes, "Pro-life interest groups overwhelmingly work with Republicans" (Schwartz interview). Another conservative insider confirms, "The pro-life caucus and special interests do hold more sway with the Republican Party" (Doane 2005). The Republican leadership, in particular, is highly supportive of the pro-life position and, until the 2006 election, wielded considerable power in Congress.

Pro-life SMIGs gain access to the Republican Party primarily through legislative service organizations (LSOs), which are working groups or caucuses that are structured to provide assistance to members of Congress in their

legislative duties. LSOs are certified by the Committee on House Administration and paid for by official government resources. LSOs are often referred to as inside/outside coalitions because they bring together lawmakers from the “inside” of Congress with interest groups from the “outside” (Backlin interview). In the case of pro-life policymaking, LSOs are the vehicle through which pro-life groups convene with lawmakers and pursue common legislative goals (SourceWatch 2007). Five LSOs exist in the House and the Senate that directly address a pro-life position on abortion. In the House, these are the Republican Study Committee (RSC), the Values Action Team (VAT) and the Bipartisan Pro-Life Caucus; in the Senate, LSOs include the Values Action Team and the Senate Steering Committee.

The RSC was founded in the early 1970s to urge the then-moderate Republican Party to assume a more conservative agenda. Known as the CAT (Conservative Action Team) until 2000, the Republican Study Committee is one of the largest Congressional Caucuses. It is a well-established LSO which offers regular access to pro-life interest groups. Comprised of more than 100 conservative Republican members of the House, the goal of the RSC is to advance the conservative economic agenda in the House. Membership in the RSC is limited and exclusive -- House members must be invited to join by RSC's steering committee. The RSC promotes its policy agenda by acting as an “internal think tank” in the House (Cole interview). It writes about legislation, amendments and other issues and has its own whip system and task forces (for example, the Family Values Task Force) (SourceWatch 2007). The RSC also

has “a lot of direct contact” with pro-life SMIGs – regularly consulting them on abortion legislation and calling or emailing them as issues arise (Cole interview).

Many pro-life SMIGs also mentioned the House Values Action Team as an important venue to address pro-life policy issues (Crippen, Maher and Henrick interviews). The VAT was founded by Tom DeLay in 1988 after James Dobson of Focus on the Family threatened to leave the Republican Party because it was not doing enough for conservative issues (Schwartz interview). In contrast to the RSC, which addresses a wide array of issues, the House VAT focuses only on social issues. In fact, the VAT tends to operate as RSC’s informal social issues arm. The VAT’s issues include abortion, assisted suicide, embryonic stem cell research, education, parental rights, pornography and religious liberty. Members of the VAT are required to have a pro-life position on abortion.

The House Pro-Life Caucus deals exclusively with abortion but it is also bipartisan, which often stymies its ability to reach its goals. Although the Pro-Life Caucus is the place where pro-life Republicans and Democrats can work together, their solutions tend to be rejected by both parties. Repeatedly, interviewees have emphasized that the Democrats and Republicans do not work well together on this issue. “There is not a lot of trust between Democrat and Republican pro-lifers” (Cole interview).

The Senate also has two legislative service organizations – the Senate VAT and the Senate Steering Committee -- but these LSOs are considered less

effective organizations than their House counterparts, largely due to the rules in the Senate, which restrict partisanship and encourage open access to the various Legislative Service Organizations. The inclusive culture of the Senate makes it hard to gather a smaller group of like-minded lawmakers. A chief of staff to one Republican Senator commented, “Nothing is anti-establishment...good manners are important...[and] certain things don’t go on here, it’s not polite” (Schwartz interview).

The Senate VAT, run by Senator Sam Brownback, is only three years old and not nearly as powerful or well-organized as the House VAT. The Senate Steering Committee is the Senate counterpart to the House Republican Study Committee. Although they perform the same function and address the same issues, the RSC is much more exclusive than the Steering Committee. The RSC only accepts Republican members while Democratic and Republican Senators are welcome at the Steering Committee meetings (Schwartz interview). In the end, the Steering Committee meetings are considered less productive due to both the diversity of positions on social issues and the large number of Senators who attend the meetings (Cole interview).

In addition to the Legislative Service Organizations, there are regular meetings held by conservative interest groups that attract members of Congress, as well as the White House staff. The Free Congress Foundation and Americans for Tax Reform are examples of two prominent conservative organizations that host such meetings. The Free Congress Foundation, founded by Paul Weyrich (a co-founder of the Moral Majority), meets every

week when Congress is in session for the “Weyrich Strategy Lunch.” This high powered meeting usually draws about 75 conservative members of the House and Senate, conservative interest groups, and representatives from the Bush administration. The Americans for Tax Reform, founded by Grover Norquist, holds Wednesday Group meetings that are also well-attended by members of Congress and conservative interest groups (Mackey interview). However, Norquist’s group focuses on a broader set of conservative issues that are both economic and social. Norquist explains that “the trick is to remind people we’re all in the same family, we all love each other” (Norquist 2006).

Pro-life SMIGs have multiple channels offering formal access to Republicans in Congress. Legislative Service Organizations are a critical component of the close relationship between the Republican Party and pro-life SMIGs. LSOs regard pro-life SMIGs as a welcome addition to their regular meetings, and SMIGs are given ample opportunity to weigh in on abortion policy in Congress (Cole interview). The relationship between pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party is clearly strong and coordination on the legislative agenda for abortion is high.

## **Resources**

Pro-life SMIGs have a range of different resources to leverage in their relationship with the Republican Party. My interviews with representatives pro-life SMIGs and members of Congress revealed that these resources are significant and often translate into influence. Republican insiders believe that

pro-life SMIGs provide “immense services” to the Republican Party, including mobilizing grassroots activists and voters, lobbying, and recruiting and training candidates for office (Schwartz interview). Additionally, the pro-life SMIGs have other resources that they can use to discourage legislation that is unfavorable to them, including radical groups and the strength of the Christian Right movement.

Pro-life SMIGs repeatedly explained that a major source of their leverage came from extensive grassroots activity, which is present in every state (Backlin and Landrum interviews). One conservative policymaker observed, “Grassroots is the power behind the anti-abortion movement. They don’t have a lot of money but they are a strong and willful grassroots. They are one-issue voters who are heartfelt on the issue...they are now considered the base of the Republican Party” (Doerflinger interview). Grassroots activity is particularly prominent in churches because of the convening function they provide. Pro-life activists can mobilize quickly and effectively. Evangelical Protestant churches, in particular, provide a vehicle for quick and easy communication to a large number of followers as issues arise (Oldfield 1996; Wilcox 1992). Unlike other interest groups that lavish campaign funds on candidates or entertain them, the strength of fundamentalist leaders lies in their flocks. “What accounts for the movement’s forward march toward power is its relentless organizing within churches” (Diamond 1994, 29). “They can be marching in one day” (Doane 2005). Catholic Churches are not nearly as politically active as their evangelical counterparts, but they also alert parishioners about important legislation. In the

case of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban, for example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was instrumental in mobilizing parishioners to send post cards to their Congressional representatives. A USCCB official stated: “We have a considerable constituency. Although the movement has become more professional and institutionalized, it has never lost its populist edge” (Doerflinger interview). The USCCB’s ability to inform and mobilize Catholics has been a very powerful tool. One Congressional insider claims, “All groups are doing a lot of stuff but a letter from the Catholic Bishops Conference is very important and bipartisan” (Cole interview).

Although the churches are a quick and convenient venue for mobilizing many followers, the pro-life SMIGs themselves also have their own grassroots networks. The Christian Coalition is one pro-life SMIG that has a powerful popular base: “[Congress] members also know we have strong Christian Coalition chapters in their states, in most cases, whose members can either help them or oppose them in their campaigns for re-election. State chapters can get the word out fast about unfavorable votes in the state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress” (Backlin interview). Despite the strength of the pro-life grassroots network, these groups all share a common complaint – they get more attention during election season and are largely ignored the rest of the time. One senior policy professional noted, “The Republican Party sees this as a way to scoop up votes. We need to have a strong presence. Right now, leverage is stronger during the election” (Schwartz interview). Many pro-life SMIGs echoed this complaint and are disappointed that the Republican Party

did not take them more seriously after the elections are over. They are bitter that their support does not bear more fruit. One stated, “Bush was elected by people who believe what FRC stands for” (Saunders interview); another commented, “They owe the pro-lifers. Without our support, they wouldn’t be here” (Schwartz interview).

Another resource stemming from the pro-life SMIGs’ ability to mobilize is exit or non-voting. “Non-voting is definitely an option,” one representative from the Family Research Council claimed (Mackey interview). Another policy analyst noted; “They can’t win if they alienate us” (Saunders interview). Although sitting out an election is a powerful tool that many interest groups have used to exert leverage in the policymaking process, there is little evidence that pro-life SMIGs have actually employed this tactic. In fact, in many elections, pro-life SMIGs have supported candidates despite a weak position on abortion (e.g. the Christian Coalition’s endorsement of Bob Dole).

The strength of grassroots backing outside the beltway is complemented by a strong lobbying presence in Washington. Pro-life SMIGs have regular access to Republican policymakers in Congress primarily through Legislative Service Organizations, which give them the ability to regularly lobby for their policy preferences. Like many interest groups, pro-life SMIGs provide valuable research and education to busy lawmakers on their policy issues. This exchange of information takes place within the legislative service organizations. The president of the Republican Study Committee explained that the pro-life SMIGs work hand-in-hand with it to produce legislation and educate members

about pro-life issues (Cole interview). One chief-of-staff to a pro-life Senator concluded, “They have the information we need” (Schwartz interview).

Some pro-life SMIGs, including the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition, publish voter scorecards which rank the representatives on issues that are important to the SMIGs and their members. The use of this indirect lobbying technique has proven to be highly effective for the SMIGs. According to the SMIGs, conservative representatives express serious concern over their “score” on the scorecard. The Family Research Council, for example, has a “True Blue” rating for policymakers who score 100% on its scorecard. The Family Research Council points out; “The scorecard is an effective tool – we hear from people who feel they should have gotten 100% all the time” (Mackey interview). This policy analyst explained that the scorecards are an excellent way to keep Congressmen who claim to share the pro-life SMIGs policy goals accountable after the election. “Once they get to Washington, we hold their feet to the fire, that’s what we’re good at” (Mackey interview). The chief lobbyist at the Christian Coalition concurs, “Having members know that we have one of the most prominent Congressional scorecards, and that we do national voter guides every presidential election, they pay attention more to their votes on key issues such as abortion” (Backlin interview).

This research revealed that a critical resource pro-life SMIGs offer is to facilitate access and increase communication among rank-and-file lawmakers, as well as from the rank-and-file to the leadership. This communication function is particularly valuable in the House of Representatives. During the time of

these interviews (pre-2006 mid-term election) the leadership in the House was much more conservative than the rank-and-file. The leaders would sometimes refuse to meet with other lawmakers -- even the conservative ones (Schwartz interview). But, according to pro-life SMIGs, the Republican congressional leadership “won’t close its doors on the pro-life interest groups” (Schwartz interview). Further, pro-life SMIGs also communicate between members of Congress – briefing them on the positions of other lawmakers. According to one pro-life SMIG, lobbying each other on policy proposals is something that Congressmen rarely do – “It would be awkward for us to do that” (Schwartz interview). This is particularly evident in the Senate. This liaison function can be a critical component in the SMIGs’ effort to convince legislators to take a pro-life position on a particular abortion issue.

In addition to the pro-life SMIGs, there are many organizations that recruit and train pro-life candidates for political office. By increasing the number of pro-life politicians in Congress, these organizations provide another valuable resource to pro-life SMIGs. The most prominent of these organizations is the Susan B. Anthony List which recruits and trains pro-life women for public office.<sup>5</sup> The organization explains its position: “We know all women are uniquely connected to this issue. The pro-abortion forces have used this to their advantage. We must counter their efforts and have enough women in public office who still stand up in the floors of the House and Senate and say ‘enough is enough, women want abortion stopped’” (Susan B Anthony List 2007). The

<sup>5</sup> Susan B. Anthony was outspoken in her life not only about the rights of women but also in her opposition to abortion.

Susan B. Anthony List is described by the top lobbyist at the Christian Coalition as “a very effective group begun as a counterweight to the Emily’s List. They do a lot of fundraisers with members of Congress providing appearances. They do a lot of direct mail. They provide funds to almost all pro-life women members of Congress” (Backlin interview). The SBA List raised \$353,874 in 2002 and \$474,330 in 2004.

There are many other organizations like political action committees (PACs) that seek to elect pro-life/conservative candidates such as the Conservative Victory Fund, Elect Life, the National Pro-Life Alliance PAC, and the Pro-Life Campaign Committee. These groups have significant funding from donors to achieve their goals. For the years 2002 and 2004 combined, the Conservative Victory Fund raised \$528,634; Elect Life raised \$1,936,180; the National Pro-Life Alliance raised \$448,308; and the Pro-Life Campaign Committee raised \$11,104,359 (Political Money Line 2007). These funds are overwhelmingly directed toward Republican candidates, which clearly speaks to the partisan nature of the pro-life issue. Over the 2002-2004 period, for example, the Susan B. Anthony List gave to 68 different candidates, only two of whom were Democrats. The Pro-Life Campaign Committee gave less than \$100 to Democratic candidates during that same period. The NRLC PAC only contributed to two Democratic campaigns in contrast to 33 Republican campaigns between 2002-2004 (Political Money Line 2007).

Scholars of interest groups and social movements have also identified the benefits of radical groups to SMIGs (or SMOs) (Gamson 1975; Haider-

Markel 1997; Gamson and Meyer 1996), and the pro-life movement has no shortage of them. Radical groups tend to be uncompromising and disinclined to work within the power structure. They continue to operate like social movements even after the movement has bureaucratized and institutionalized. Operation Rescue, the Pro-Life Action League, and the Traditional Values Coalition are among the most notable radical pro-life groups. All of these groups view abortion in America as nothing short of a crisis. While most mainstream pro-life SMIGs are satisfied with incremental progress, the radical pro-life SMIGs are uncompromising in their goals and will be only satisfied with a total ban on abortion. In essence, these groups have taken the “exit-option” in refusing to compromise in the political process. These groups have practically no contact with lawmakers and are highly critical of the other pro-life SMIGs. By presenting the extreme policy position, they influence lawmakers to accept mainstream SMIGs position. As Zald and McCarthy put it, “Extremism in one part of the movement helps leaders in another part” (1979, 3).

Operation Rescue was founded in 1988 by Randall Terry. It is more inclined to engage in movement-like activities. It quickly became the most visible and prominent of the radical pro-life groups, moving into the national spotlight when it staged a protest outside an Atlanta abortion clinic during the 1988 Democratic National Convention in the same city. It continued to protest outside of abortion clinics throughout the United States (Ginsburg 1989), and in 1996 members protested outside of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago (Walker 1996). The mainstream pro-life SMIGs have distanced

themselves from Operation Rescue. In fact, the National Right to Life Committee will not even acknowledge Operation Rescue in its newsletter, *National Right to Life News*, because its policy is to cover only legal pro-life activities (Neuhaus 1989). After a lawsuit by the National Organization for Women left the organization crippled financially, Operation Rescue and Terry have kept a low profile. Terry re-emerged during the Terry Schiavo incident where he was on hand with other pro-life activists, including Father Frank Pavone, the head of Priests for Life. Terry was also vocal in New York City during the 2004 Republican National Convention. Criticizing the “Big Tent” approach of the party, which includes pro-choice Republicans, Terry stated, “A big tent includes those who would kill innocent children... [who are] as evil as those once engaged in slavery” (Lefevere 2004).

The Pro-Life Action League (PLAL) is another radical pro-life SMIG which views the number of abortions performed in the United States as being at crisis levels. Although it agrees with the consistent life philosophy (opposing the death penalty and euthanasia as well as abortion), it criticizes groups that, in PLAL’s opinion, lump these issues together. Eric Scheidler, son of the founder, stated that the death penalty cannot be compared to abortion because while there may be 60 executions per year, there are more than 3000 abortions performed every day. He concludes, “We regard with great suspicion tools to marginalize abortion – it should be at the forefront” (Scheidler interview). Scheidler also stated, “Our ultimate goal is transformation of a culture of death into a culture of life. Not reversal of *Roe v. Wade* because that only gets us

back to 1973, not to the beginning. Abortions were still taking place at the state level then” (Scheidler interview).

The Traditional Values Coalition (TVC), founded by Reverend Lou Sheldon, is another radical pro-life organization. TVC has had some interaction with LSOs in Congress, however Sheldon was actually suspended from the House Values Action Team (VAT) in 2003 because he opposed lawmakers who supported the re-importation of United States drugs from Canada. TVC’s main concern was that the legislation would make it easier for people to import RU 486, dubbed “the abortion pill.” However, in the process, TVC targeted twenty Republican lawmakers who had spotless anti-abortion voting records. Joe Pitts R-PA, in a letter to Sheldon, commented, “[Y]our willingness to attack members of Congress whom you should regard as your friends, without so much as a warning, is offensive” (Rovner 2003, 4).

Finally, of all of the resources that pro-life SMIGs bring to bear, the biggest remains the Christian Right movement. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Christian Right incorporated the pro-life issue onto its agenda by the early 1980s, and since then Christian Right groups have become the most prominent pro-life advocates. In fact, perhaps with the exception of the National Right to Life Committee, these Christian Right multi-issue organizations have dwarfed the single issue pro-life groups. This affiliation has supported and sustained the pro-life movement since the 1980s. At the same time, the connection to the Christian Right movement has also changed the pro-life SMIGs and the broader

movement which, although it has benefited from the prominence and resources of the Christian Right, has also become highly identified with that group.

### **The Case of the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act**

The 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (BAPCPA) is an excellent example of the successful use of resources by pro-life SMIGs in Congress. BAPCPA is the most significant revision of the federal bankruptcy code since 1978. In the works since 1997, the purpose of the legislation is to calculate a debtor's means to pay his/her debt, assessing whether there is a case for abuse. This legislation would force debtors to file for bankruptcy under Chapter 13 rather than Chapter 11, resulting in a requirement that debtors repay some of their debt (Masterson 2002).

This legislation would have had nothing to do with abortion, but Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) introduced an amendment ("the Schumer Amendment") that would block the declaration of bankruptcy by those who incurred fines stemming from violent abortion clinic protests (Broder 2002). Some argue that Schumer added the amendment because he and other Democrats did not want the legislation to pass but were reluctant to directly confront the powerful business interests supporting the legislation. Another explanation has to do with the 1994 Federal Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE). Schumer drafted FACE which restricted protesters' activities outside of abortion clinics (Seattle Times 2002). In 1998, Randall Terry of Operation

Rescue incurred a \$1.5 million debt in fines under FACE. Terry quickly filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy and effectively wiped out his debt (Shenon 2002).

Schumer challenged accusations that this legislation was directed at pro-life groups declaring, “[W]e have a broad consensus -- pro-choice and pro-life – that people who use violence to shut down clinics should be stopped” (Shenon 2002, 1).

Up for consideration in 2001, this legislation stood a good chance of passing, with strong bipartisan support in both houses of Congress and from President Bush (Shenon 2002). BAPCPA was approved by the House and Senate but experienced problems when it went to the conference committee. By the summer of 2002, pro-life SMIGs heard about the amendment and sprang into action to oppose it (even though most of them were supportive of the actual bankruptcy legislation). Tony Perkins, then-president of the Family Research Council called the amendment “blatant bigotry against free speech and pro-life activism” (Stolberg 2005, 17). The Christian Coalition threatened to score any vote on the bankruptcy bill with the Schumer amendment as a “double negative vote” on their voter scorecards. Subsequently, the Family Research Council and Eagle Forum both pledged to take the same action on their scorecards (Backlin interview). Even the Republican Study Group, which counts many fiscal conservatives as its members, only supported the bill without the Schumer amendment (Masterson, 2002). In Congress, long-time pro-life supporter Henry Hyde was extremely vocal on the issue, “[T]his is a matter of principle. There’s no reason to have something so lopsided in this

legislation” (Shenon 2002, 1). The Schumer Amendment was subsequently stripped of direct references to abortion by 2002 and Hyde accepted the language (Curry 2005).

The pro-life SMIGs’ strategy was to keep the bill off of the House floor. When then-Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL) delayed the vote on the bill, the Family Research Council sent him a letter of thanks that was co-signed by Focus on the Family, Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, and Eagle Forum. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops lobbied separately and sent a letter as well. However, after the November election in 2002, House leaders Dick Armey and Tom Delay tried to sneak through the legislation with the amendment. The pro-life SMIGs had only a few hours to mobilize and contact their members to call their representatives to oppose the legislation. Jim Backlin of the Christian Coalition described the event:

[I]mmediately after the 2002 election in November, we heard rumors that in an extremely unusual move, the House leadership would bring the bankruptcy reform bill up for a vote on the House floor, we even defeated Members of Congress being able to vote on such a bill, and the newly elected Members not being able to vote on this bill. So we got 4 hours notice one day before the vote on the bankruptcy reform bill with the Schumer pro-abortion amendment attached, just a few days after the November 2002 election, and made calls to Christian Coalition’s state chairmen who in turn called key members of the House to urge them to vote NO on the bankruptcy reform bill. The bottom line when the time expired ....the bill was going down in defeat by one vote. The House leadership twisted and twisted arms and made deals for 30 more minutes and still did not change enough votes. So they allowed people to ‘vote their consciences’ and Members who were voting FOR the bill began changing their votes and the bill went down to defeat by 71 votes! Christian Coalition played a major role. Earlier that year we made the decision that this would be one of our major issues in 2002 (Backlin interview).

To what does Backlin attribute the success that the Christian Coalition and other pro-life SMIGs had in blocking the Schumer Amendment and defeating the legislation? “We did it through grassroots power” (2006).

What makes this victory doubly impressive is that the pro-life SMIGs were up against an powerful force. Most important, the Coalition for Responsible Bankruptcy Laws was lobbying heavily for the passage of the legislation. The Coalition included the American Financial Services Association (the trade group that represents the major credit card companies), individual credit card companies (including VISA, MasterCard, MBNA America, Capital One and Citicorp), auto companies (including Ford, General Motors and Daimler/Chrysler). Together these entities had contributed more than \$40 million in political fundraising and millions more lobbying for the legislation since 1989 (Labaton 2005). When asked how they failed when the pro-lifer’s succeeded, one of the banking industry’s top lobbyists conceded that they did not have the grassroots power that the pro-life groups had (Backlin interview).

In 2005, Schumer stripped the bill of language specific to abortion and claimed that the amendment would apply to any protester who used violence (Stolberg 2005). However, on March 8, 2005, the Republican-dominated Senate voted against the inclusion of the Schumer amendment 53 to 46 (Day 2005). The bill passed later that year with no Schumer Amendment due, in large part, to the efforts of pro-life SMIGs.

## Conclusion

This chapter examines the capacities and limitations of SMIGs due to the tension between the ideological constraints posed by the broader movement and the demand for compromise by the home party.

Tension exists among the pro-life SMIGs stemming from the many differences in philosophy and issues they espouse. Issues like the death penalty, contraception and birth control, and other “family” and “life” issues such as homosexuality, divorce, and euthanasia place these groups in a tenuous position with one another. Differences in conservative philosophy (fiscal or social) add strain as pro-life SMIGs push policy change in Congress. Groups are subsequently viewed as either too ideological or too political.

My research substantiated that resources affect SMIG’s leverage over and access to the home party. The first example, legislative service organizations, is at once a source of access and a resource. The Republican Party has established a system of regular contact with pro-life SMIGs through LSOs. Subsequently, SMIGs have become an integral part of the pro-life policymaking process. Weekly meetings with the Republican Study Group and the Values Action Team, in particular, ensure an active role for SMIGs in setting the Congressional agenda on pro-life matters, drafting legislation, lobbying and accumulating votes for important bills.

As seen through the Bankruptcy Abuse Legislation and the Schumer Amendment, the power of the grassroots as a resource for pro-life and Christian Right SMIGs is strong. The ability of pro-life SMIGs to defeat the Schumer

Amendment when up against the powerful and well-funded banking and credit card industry is an excellent example of the strength of the pro-life grassroots.

## CHAPTER FOUR - THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

*[T]he movement's history cannot be understood merely as a chronicle of how activists worked to mobilize masses of gay men and lesbians and to achieve a fixed agenda. Instead, the movement constitutes a phase, albeit a decisive one, of a much longer historical process through which a group of men and women came into existence as a self-conscious, cohesive minority.*

*---John D'Emilio (1983, 130)*

To demonstrate that the phenomenon of SMIGs and home parties is not limited to the pro-life movement and the Republican Party, I turn next to a very different case -- that of gay rights groups and their association with the Democratic Party. This chapter will examine the emergence of the gay rights movement, the development of gay rights SMIGs and their relationship with the Democratic Party from the 1950s through 2004. Through an analysis of party platforms, presidential politics, organizational literature and other secondary sources, I will demonstrate the following: First, as the gay rights movement raised public consciousness to the national level, the Democratic and Republican Parties were compelled to take a stand on the issue. Second, the Democratic Party supported the gay rights SMIGs and became their home party, while the Republican Party rejected the gay rights movement (siding with its loyal constituents -- the Christian Right).

This chapter is organized chronologically with divisions that follow the major changes in the relationship among the gay rights movement, gay rights SMIGs, and the Democratic Party from the post World War II period through to the contemporary era. I identify three periods of movement development: Gay

Liberation (1969-1979), AIDS Era/Conservative Backlash (1980-1991), and Political Incorporation (1992-2004).

Gays and Lesbians first awakened to a gay identity<sup>1</sup> during the Homophile period (WWII-1960s). At the end of the 1960s, the Gay Liberation phase was sparked by the Stonewall Riots. After Stonewall and throughout the 1970s, gay rights SMIGs formed. However, it was not until the late 1970s that a home party/SMIG relationship developed between the Democratic Party and the gay rights movement. The movement was transformed into a political force in the 1980s, with the emergence of the Christian Right, the Reagan administration and the AIDS crisis. It was during this decade that political parties crystallized their positions on gay rights. The Democratic Party, somewhat reluctantly – yet in keeping with its pro-civil rights stance -- defended sexual orientation as a civil right. Conversely, the Republican Party, out of allegiance to the Christian Right, took an anti-gay rights position. The polarization of political parties on the issue of gay rights continued during the Political Incorporation Phase under Democratic President Bill Clinton, who brought even greater national prominence to the issue. Political incorporation was not reversed under George W. Bush with the resurgence of Republicans and Christian Conservatives, although access to the White House was sharply reduced. I conducted my interviews during this last phase at a time when gay marriage emerged as the most prominent gay rights issue.

<sup>1</sup> This was the first time significant numbers of gays and lesbians moved out of their small towns and realized that there was a whole group of gays and lesbians in the world.

### **Prelude to a Movement**

After World War II, Americans experienced a period of social dislocation and rapid social change, which increased geographic mobility for all people. “The War and its aftermath induced massive geographical migrations, uprooting people from familiar surroundings, cutting off traditional patterns of social interaction, and permitting individuals to construct their social identities anew” (Wald et al. 1996, 1157). During this period, many gay men and lesbians literally found each other and explored their identities (D’Emilio 1983; Smith and Haider-Markel 2002; Haeberle 1989). Gay men and lesbians experienced a brief period of openness for the remainder of the 1940s. This phenomenon was mostly evident on a social and intellectual level with the proliferation of gay bars and clubs, and the discussion of gay and lesbian themes in literature and in the popular press (D’Emilio 1998). Although not particularly a political period, it was a time of increased identification of, and communication between, gay men and lesbians.

### **The Homophile Period (1950s-1969)**

The gay renaissance of the post-WWII period proved to be temporary. What followed was a particularly hard period for gay men and lesbians. Working women were displaced from their jobs by returning soldiers and forced back into their traditional roles. This had a devastating effect on lesbians who completely lost their new found economic freedom. The conservative era of the 1950s included, most notably, McCarthyism, which targeted homosexuals as

well as Communists (Adam 1987). Additionally, the United States government made attempts to eliminate homosexuals from its employ at every level of government (D'Emilio 1983). The FBI conducted routine surveillance of gay communities, the postal authorities opened mail of suspected homosexuals and police regularly harassed them (D'Emilio 1992). There was no support by the government for the rights of gay men and lesbians during the Homophile period.

In response to this conservative era, the first gay and lesbian organizations formed – the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. The Mattachine Society was a gay rights organization founded in 1951 in Los Angeles by Harry Hay and five other gay Communists. Hay envisioned that the Mattachine Society would someday transform the view of homosexuals to that of a bona fide minority group with the same legal protection given to other groups (D'Emilio 1998). The Mattachine Society worked to unify homosexuals, to educate heterosexuals, and to assist those who were victimized for their sexual orientation (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). “Mattachines originated with a comprehensive vision of social and political change for gay people and a willingness to challenge anti-homosexual attacks even in the midst of McCarthyism” (Adam 1987, 67). The Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was a lesbian rights organization and the unofficial counterpart to the Mattachine Society. Founded in San Francisco in 1955, the DOB was more moderate than the Mattachine Society, focusing on education and information. Its goal was to promote a positive lesbian identity in American society.

During the Homophile Period, these new gay rights organizations played an important role in advancing the gay rights movement. Meeker states: “By fighting for equal civil rights, the Homophile Movement in fact set the stage for separate, institutionally autonomous homosexual communities and neighborhoods to thrive in subsequent decades. In doing so, the Homophile Movement was daring, aggressive, and successful” (2001, 116). Although the movement and its organizations did not yet engage in confrontational politics, in the context of the conservative 1950s, the Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis and the broader movement were quite radical.

### **The Gay Liberation Movement (1969-1979)**

The 1960s brought more promise for the burgeoning gay rights movement as formal restrictions lessened and activism increased. The success of the Civil Rights Movement in particular bolstered and guided the gay rights movement. Gay rights activists worked toward fair employment practices and the repeal of sodomy laws that existed in most states. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), an early ally of the gay rights movement, supported both of these goals. Legal advancements during this period included several court cases which began to provide protection against sexual harassment of gay men and lesbians.

Just as *Roe v. Wade* ignited the abortion movement, the modern gay rights movement exploded with the Stonewall Riots in 1969. The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City. Patrons of gay bars were

often victimized by police and typically accepted this harassment with little resistance. However, on June 27, 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn, the gay patrons fought back. A routine raid quickly became a riot, lasting for two days. This event triggered a connection in the minds of many young lesbians and gay men between their plight and that of the Civil Rights Movement. This sense of victimization and assertion of civil rights changed the character of the movement and accelerated its growth (D'Emilio et al. 2000). Gay men and lesbians began to fight for legal protections, as well as changes in the law and social policy (Blasius 2001; Riggle and Tadlock 1999). The Homophile Phase of the gay rights movement was transformed almost overnight into the Gay Liberation Movement.

After Stonewall, several gay rights SMIGs formed, but quickly divided over strategies. The radical groups of the 1970s stood in sharp contrast to the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis in the 1950s and 1960s. The new activists were unwilling to settle for small, incremental victories. This was due in part to the experience of Stonewall, but also to the influence of other social movements of the decade (including the anti-war, women's rights, and civil rights movements), which engendered a militancy in the gay community that overturned the more assimilationist homophile approach. Subsequently, the quest for civil rights or inclusion into the larger society shifted. Gay men and lesbians became disenchanted with mainstream America which they increasingly viewed as racist, sexist, and militarist (Adam 1987).

At the time of Stonewall, only about 50 gay and lesbian organizations had formed across the United States. However, by 1973 -- four years after Stonewall -- there were more than 800 gay rights organizations operating on all levels of government. This number grew into the thousands by the end of the 1970s (D'Emilio et al. 2000). Many of the main players in the contemporary gay rights movement emerged during this period including Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (LLDEF), the National Gay Task Force (which would become the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, or NGLTF) and the Stonewall Democrats United. By the 1970s, gay rights activists began to shift their focus from movement-like tactics to lobbying on the state and national levels (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

This era of increased social activism brought significant positive changes in the status of gay men and lesbians in the United States. Specifically, many professional organizations changed their official position on and assessment of homosexuality. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Other groups that revised their position on or diagnosis of homosexuality included the American Sociological Association, the National Association for Mental Health and the National Association of Social Workers (Adam 1987). By 1975, even the United States Civil Service Commission had dropped its ban on the employment of gay men and lesbians. Further, by the end of the decade, almost half of the states had repealed their sodomy statutes (D'Emilio et al. 2000).

These political and social successes, however, precipitated a reaction from the growing Christian Right.<sup>2</sup> The gay rights movement prompted a quick response from the multi-issue Christian Right SMIGs. This opposition was often on the state and local levels and generally took the form of anti-gay ballot initiatives (Jeske 1993). For Conservative Christians, homosexuality was a strong symbol of the moral decline they believed had taken hold in the United States (Adam 1997). One well-known example of anti-gay activism was the referendum in Florida spearheaded by Anita Bryant, the head of an organization called Save Our Children Network. The 1977 initiative focused on overturning a Dade County law passed the year before which protected gay men and lesbians from discrimination.

Besides increasing opposition from the Christian Right, gay rights SMIGs wrestled with intra-movement divisions. Early in the gay rights movement, major differences emerged between gay men and lesbians. Given the myriad issues that the women's rights movement faced at that time, it is not surprising that these differences arose. Lesbians were understandably divided over whether to align with the women's movement or the gay rights movement. Further, although lesbians identified with both movements, neither accepted them completely. The women's movement at that time had a heterosexual bias – not willing to add gay rights to an already uphill battle for women's rights (Evans 1979). The gay rights movement, like the civil rights movement before it, was often dominated by men. Women were relegated to stereotypically

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the emergence of the Christian Right, see Chapter Two.

female roles like typing, filing and cooking while at the same time trying to fight for their rights as lesbians (Evans 1979; Smith 1999).

During the 1970s, there were major differences in political philosophy between gay men and lesbians, as gay men and their organizations attempted to institutionalize the movement and operate within mainstream political organizations. Lesbians, however, tended to reject this assimilationist approach and instead focused on creating a separate counter-culture (Jeske 1993; Vaid 1996; Adam 1987; D'Emilio et al. 2000; Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). Such differences kept these disparate parts of the movement separate until the AIDS crisis brought them together in the 1980s.

By the late 1970s, gay rights became a significant enough political issue to gain the attention of the national parties. The Democratic Party's established position on women's rights, abortion, and especially civil rights made it the likely home party to the gay rights movement (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). The Democratic Party considered including a gay rights plank in the national platform in 1976 stemming from a statement by Jimmy Carter that he was opposed to discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, Carter refused to support the plank, and subsequently there was no discussion of gay rights issues in the 1976 Democratic national platform.

As President, Carter did support some advances for gay rights, such as removing a policy that barred gay men and lesbians from the Foreign Service, and reversing an IRS anti-homosexual policy for tax-exempt charities. Additionally, in 1977, Carter broke new ground by inviting a group of lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) activists to the White House. This was the first official White House visit by gay men and lesbians. Despite these overtures, Carter disappointed gay men and lesbians in 1980 when he was up for re-election by again refusing to support a gay rights plank in the national platform. Carter also refused to issue an executive order that would ban anti-gay discrimination in the federal government (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). Many gay and lesbian voters shifted their support to Senator Ted Kennedy during the primary and subsequently stayed home when Carter faced Ronald Reagan in the general election (Apuzzo 2000).

Carter notwithstanding, the Democratic Party did include gay rights in its 1980 platform. The party added two critical words, “sexual orientation,” to its statement on civil rights reading, “We must affirm the dignity of all people and the right of each individual to have equal access to, and participation in the institutions and services of our society. All groups must be protected from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, language, age, sex or sexual orientation” (Democratic National Committee 1980). The inclusion of gay rights in the 1980 Democratic platform was a critical step in the relationship that was building between the gay rights SMIGs and Democratic Party. That year, the Republican Party did not address sexual orientation in its platform and would not for another twelve years.

### **AIDS and the Conservative Backlash (1980-1991)**

Although the Democratic Party acknowledged gay men and lesbians in its 1980 national platform, it would not have the opportunity to implement its proposals. Republican Ronald Reagan was elected president, marking the beginning of twelve years of Republican dominance in Washington. Not only did Reagan win, but he did so with the help of the group that was the most outspoken critic of gay and lesbian rights, the Christian Right. Further, Reagan was only in office for a short time before AIDS (Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome) first surfaced -- primarily among homosexuals. Reagan, his alliance with the Christian Right, and the emergence of AIDS were a disastrous combination for the gay rights movement.

AIDS quickly became a major political and health issue. It was a mysterious disease that seemed to predominantly affect gay men in urban areas. The spread of AIDS among homosexuals and the lack of understanding about what it was, how it was contracted, and how it was spread, caused panic in gay communities. The life or death nature of AIDS mobilized many gay men and lesbians and brought them out of the closet (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). As devastating as AIDS was, it also galvanized and politicized the gay rights movement. In response to the AIDS crisis, gay rights SMIGs quickly added health care, social services, and scientific research to their policy agendas. Many policymakers at all levels of government took on the AIDS issue and began a dialogue with the gay community. "AIDS...did its part in putting a face on gay people in the 1980s, and the mass hysteria about the

epidemic, fueled by the Christian Right, sparked even more resolve among many gay men and lesbians to come out of the closet and fight” (Signorile 1999, 25). The importance of AIDS as a politicizing force for the gay community cannot be overstated.

Ronald Reagan failed to respond to the AIDS crisis in a timely or effective fashion. First, his administration attempted to block the Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, from doing his job. Koop had been a favorite of both Reagan and the Christian Right particularly for his opposition to abortion. However, the Reagan administration and Koop clashed over how to handle the AIDS crisis. Koop viewed his role in the AIDS crisis as one of communicator and educator, “The Surgeon General is mandated by Congress to inform the American people about the prevention of disease and the promotion of health. If ever there was a public in need of education and straight talk about AIDS, it was the American people” (Martin 1996, 241). However, the Reagan administration did not support Koop’s plan to educate the public. In fact, the administration cautioned Koop not to initiate any statements about AIDS, and further informed the media that all questions about AIDS were off limits. When he was finally asked to weigh-in on AIDS, Koop’s most controversial suggestion was to advocate the use of condoms. He premised his statement by saying that he did not personally advocate sex outside of marriage, but if people chose to engage in non-marital sex that they should use a condom. Koop received swift and severe criticism from the Christian Right. Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation and Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum in particular

accused Koop of representing “the homosexual’s views and not those of the pro-family movement” (Martin 1996, 250). Subsequently, in the first several years of the appearance of AIDS, the Reagan administration remained silent on the issue. It was not until non-gay victims of AIDS began to surface (like children and people who had received blood transfusions) that the administration slowly began to address AIDS on a public policy level (Adam 1997).

This crisis in the gay community, coupled with the reluctance of the Reagan Administration to address AIDS in any significant way invigorated the gay rights SMIGs. “AIDS became the impetus for a new wave of mobilization and a new set of organizations, some of which developed unprecedented, routinized connections to state institutions, social welfare systems and health bureaucracies” (Adam 1987, 156). Not only did AIDS invigorate existing SMIGS, but the AIDS crisis actually spurred the creation of its own separate movement, complete with groups that dealt exclusively with AIDS. Groups like ACT UP and Lesbian Avengers formed to protest discrimination against those with AIDS. Other groups formed to address AIDS included the National AIDS Network, AIDS Action Council, Interfaith AIDS Network and the National Organizations Responding to AIDS, the National Minority AIDS Council, and the National Leadership Coalition on AIDS. The focus of these groups was to increase funding for AIDS and AIDS research, and to hasten the release of new drugs by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The 1980s was a decade of increasing institutionalization and national focus by gay rights SMIGs. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force relocated to Washington D.C. from New York, and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund grew in size and litigation efforts. Finally, the Human Rights Fund (which would become the Human Rights Campaign) merged with the Gay Rights National Lobby and shifted away from its grassroots focus to a more national one (Vaid 1996). Despite the Christian Right and AIDS, gay men and lesbians “became increasingly active participants in all spheres of civil society as they organized at work, in communities, in churches, in health and social services, in sports, in the media, education, and the arts” (Adam 1987).

As the Christian Right solidified its relationship with the Republican Party, it became clear that the Democratic Party was the only avenue to influence gay rights policy at the national level. Members of the gay rights movement increasingly began to turn to the Democratic Party, and the Party, somewhat reluctantly, began to take on gay rights as part of its policy agenda. The 1984 Democratic Party platform was more vocal on the issue of gay rights. First, it restated its 1980 position including sexual orientation in its list of those “whom society has historically prevented from enjoying the benefits of full citizenship.” Then it made some monumental statements, especially considering that the Republican Party had not yet addressed the issue of gay rights. The expanded gay rights plank addressed workplace discrimination, military service, AIDS and immigration: “We will support legislation to prohibit discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation. We will assure that

sexual orientation per se does not serve as a bar to participation in the military. We will support an enhanced effort to learn the cause and cure of AIDS, and to provide treatment for people with AIDS. And we will ensure that foreign citizens are not excluded from this country on the basis of their sexual orientation” (Democratic National Committee 1984).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the length of the 1988 Democratic platform was only about 10% of 1984’s as the party opted for brevity on all subjects. The Democratic Party included sexual orientation in its civil rights statement, yet it did not offer the specific assurances contained in the 1984 platform. It simply stated: “We honor our multicultural heritage by assuring equal access to government services, employment, housing, business enterprise and education to every citizen regardless of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicapping condition or sexual orientation” (Democratic National Committee 1988). During the Democratic primaries, Democratic contenders for the presidential nomination did discuss gay rights but the issue faded once Michael Dukakis received the nomination (Haider-Markel 2005). For their part, the Republican Party still failed to address gay rights in its 1988 platform and gay rights was not a topic in the Republican Presidential contenders’ campaigns.

The Republican Party would soon become vocal on gay rights due to its most prominent constituency, the Christian Right, which was particularly concerned about the issue. Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council explained, “[W]e have devoted a great deal of time and energy to the gay-rights

issues because we see this issue as saying a great deal about the country and how we think about liberty and virtue” (Martin 1996). Christian Right SMIGs argued that pro-gay public policy posed a threat to traditional families (Bull and Gallagher 1996). The close relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican Party further solidified the relationship between gay and lesbian SMIGs and the Democratic Party.

### **Political Incorporation Phase (1992-2004)**

When George H.W. Bush made a tactical decision to court the Christian Right’s vote in 1992 (see Chapter Two), that move included opposing most gay rights issues. 1992 was the first year that the Republican Party addressed gay rights in its platform. The platform and the overall tone of the Republican National Convention was explicitly anti-gay. This strategy, aimed at retaining the Southern vote, succeeded there, but overwhelmingly backfired everywhere else. Bush and the Republicans were viewed by many Americans as having taken their conservative position too far (Schmalz 1992b).

The Republican Party platform was explicit in its opposition to gay rights. The platform supported the Boy Scouts of America in their fight to exclude homosexuals from their ranks, stating:

We also stand united with those private organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America, who are defending decency in fulfillment of their own moral responsibilities. We reject the irresponsible position of those corporations that have cut off contributions to such organizations because of their courageous stand for family values (Republican National Committee 1992).

Then, it rejected the view that gay men and lesbians are a minority group based on their sexual orientation, “Moreover, we oppose efforts by the Democratic Party to include sexual preference as a protected minority receiving preferential status under civil rights statues at the federal, state and local level.” It next addressed same-sex marriage, “[W]e oppose any legislation or law that legally recognizes same-sex marriages.” (Interestingly, this statement implied that the Democratic Party supported same-sex marriage – an issue upon which it had not yet officially taken a position). Finally, the Republican Party voiced its opposition to then-governor Clinton’s proposal to allow gay men and lesbians into the military: “Unlike the Democratic Party and its candidate, we support the continued exclusion of homosexuals from the military as a matter of good order and discipline” (Republican National Committee 1992). These policy positions virtually shut gay rights supporters out of the Republican Party. The Republican Platform Committee refused to even meet with gay rights groups. Urvashi Vaid of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force said of the Republicans, “This is the most explicitly anti-gay campaign we’ve ever seen. It’s hateful. The party is saying, ‘we don’t want you’” (Schmalz 1992b, A1).

1992 was the first year in which presidential candidates addressed gay and lesbian issues in any substantial way. During the Democratic primaries, all five top Democratic contenders for the nomination courted gay voters. Specifically, Bill Clinton and the other four frontrunners endorsed repealing the ban on gay men in the military (Schmalz 1992a). The Democratic Party again reaffirmed its position on the civil rights of gay men and lesbians in the national

party platform (Bull and Gallagher 1996). Yet even as it reiterated its opposition to discrimination of any type, it did not go further to explicitly address the rights of gay men and lesbians as it had in 1984: “Democrats continue to lead the fight to ensure that no Americans suffer discrimination or deprivation of rights on the basis of race, gender, language, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics irrelevant to ability” (Democratic National Committee 1992). The Democrats were trying to moderate between advocates and opponents of gay rights at the same time: “[T]he Democrats can’t be perceived as promoting it. It’s not clear how it’s going to play out, because we’ve never had it in a Presidential race like this before” (Schmalz 1992, A1). Democrat Bill Clinton was elected President that year with strong support from gay men and lesbians. Frymer observes, “[I]mportant to mobilizing the gay and lesbian vote was that Clinton also placed their issues on the national agenda, announcing at a speech to gay political leaders ... ‘I have a vision and you are part of it’” (Frymer 1999). About 72 percent of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community cast its vote for Clinton and contributed approximately \$3 million to his campaign (Bull and Gallagher 1996; Lewis and Edelson 2002; D’Emilio 1996).

As Clinton began his presidency, he brought gay rights to center stage – fulfilling a pledge he had made to gay men and lesbians -- with an initiative to lift the ban on gay men in the military. While Clinton may have anticipated backlash from the military, he also received it from lawmakers and voters. Many lawmakers (including Democratic ones) voiced opposition to the proposal.

Even with Clinton's support and a Democratic majority in both Houses, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress failed to overturn the ban (Wald et al. 1996). Seeing his popularity swiftly declining and opposition mounting from the Christian Right (as well as the military), Clinton quickly shifted gears to support the "don't ask, don't tell" policy (Diamond 1998). This policy literally means that the military was not allowed to ask servicemen and women about their sexual orientation, nor are these service people required to divulge it (Hogan 1994; Bailey et al. 2003). Although this policy might be considered an improvement for gay rights, homosexual activity continued to be considered grounds for dismissal from the military (Wald 2002). Further, the definition of a homosexual act included the mere public declaration of one's homosexuality (D'Amico 2002).

Gay rights advocates were outraged about Clinton's failure to lift the ban on gay men in the military. However, few gay rights SMIGs or activists were willing to openly criticize him, especially early in his administration. Gay rights SMIGs had no alternative in the Republican Party, and Clinton actually represented the most progressive Democratic position. The story of gay Washington political consultant, David Mixner, is illustrative of the tentative political position in which gay rights SMIGs found themselves. Mixner was greeted with criticism from gay rights SMIGs when he decided to protest the new military policy outside the White House. "I knew I wasn't going to receive much praise from the LGBT community, which was bitterly divided over my decision to take on this Administration over its policy on gays in the military" (Mixner 2000, 9). However, Mixner concluded that this

was a case where thousands of lives have been impacted in a seriously damaging way. When I was mulling over a response to the President's decision, I put myself in the shoes of the soldiers who would have to live under such a policy....They were the ones who would have to sacrifice their identity and live in secrecy. So I asked myself if I could live with such a compromise, if I personally could bear the sacrifice required. And I knew that I could never deny my existence on a daily basis (Mixner 2000, 11).

Electing to be more practical, gay rights SMIGs were reluctant to criticize the first President who openly supported gay rights. The alternative was worse -- the increasingly anti-gay Republican Party.

In 1996, Bill Clinton ran for re-election against Republican challenger Bob Dole. The 1996 Democratic platform reaffirmed its position on gay rights stating, "We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation...We support continued efforts, like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end discrimination against gay men and lesbians and further their full inclusion in the life of the nation" (Democratic National Committee 1996). The platform noticeably did not include the 1992 statement supporting equality for homosexuals in the military. Neither did the Democratic platform address more divisive issues like civil unions and gay marriage – which the Republican Party explicitly opposed. The Democratic Party and President Clinton appeared to be backpedaling on the gay rights issue.

The Republican Party with its 1996 platform continued to hold itself firmly opposed to gay rights issues and President Bill Clinton's position on gay men in the military in particular: "We oppose Bill Clinton's assault on the culture and traditions of the Armed Forces, especially his attempt to lift the ban on

homosexuals in the military. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.” Next, the platform, while supporting equal rights in general, denied that discrimination laws should cover sexual preference: “[T]he sole source of equal opportunity for all is equality before the law. Therefore, we oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, creed, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti-discrimination statutes. We reject the distortion of those laws to cover sexual preference.” The Republican platform also asserted its opposition to same-sex marriage and support of legislation establishing marriage as that between a man and a woman. “[W]e endorse the Defense of Marriage Act to prevent states from being forced to recognize same-sex unions.” (Republican National Committee 1996).

Despite the “don’t ask, don’t tell” debacle, and a retreat on gay rights initiatives in general, gay men and lesbians overwhelmingly supported President Clinton again in 1996. When he was re-elected, Clinton formally recognized this constituency -- which had helped put him in the White House -- in a symbolic way. Gay men and lesbians were welcomed to the inaugural festivities. There was a lesbian inaugural gala, a reception honoring the leaders of gay and lesbian clubs, and the Gay Men’s Chorus of Washington sang at an official inaugural event. After the fanfare, however, Clinton deeply disappointed his faithful constituency when he signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law, even though he assessed it as both unnecessary and divisive (Lewis and Edelson 2002). Introduced in 1996, DOMA defined marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman. DOMA prevents same-sex

married couples from receiving federal benefits and allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages from other states (Haider-Markel 1999). DOMA was passed swiftly with support from most Republicans and about a third of Democrats. The Democratic Party and Clinton were not ready to endorse same-sex marriage, and this position remained consistent through the 2004 platform.

Clinton did take some positive action on behalf of gay men and lesbians during his second term. He appointed gay men and lesbians to several senior positions in the White House including Virginia Apuzzo, Assistant to the President for Administration and Management; M. John Berry, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget at the Department of the Interior; James Hormel, Ambassador to Luxembourg; and Fred Hochberg, Deputy Administrator to the U.S. Small Business Administration (Bull 1998). Clinton issued an executive order in 1999 banning discrimination based on sexual orientation for federal civilian workers and added \$700 million in federal AIDS research treatment, and prevention (Johnson 1999). At a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Fundraiser in 1997, Clinton stated, "All America loses if we let prejudice and discrimination stifle the hopes or deny the potential of a single American. All America loses when any person is denied or forced out of a job because of sexual orientation. Being gay, the last time I thought about it, seemed to have nothing to do with the ability to read a balance book, fix a broken bone, or change a spark plug" (Heitz 1997, 14). In return, Clinton had outspoken support from many gay rights SMIGs. Human Rights Campaign

(HRC) President Elizabeth Birch lauded Clinton, “[T]he President has absolutely altered the air we breathe” (Thurman 1997). Gay politicians also praised the Administration’s gay rights policy. Democratic Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) observed, “[T]he difference between the Democrats and Republicans on gay rights is one of the sharpest issues separating the two parties. For the past twenty years, the two national political platforms have been virtual opposites on gay issues, with the Democrats strongly supportive and the Republicans militantly in opposition” (Frank 2004, 11).

By 2000, the Democratic Party had clearly become the home party of the gay rights movement but it still failed to embrace many of the issues most critical to gay rights SMIGs. Some Democratic Congressmen supported civil unions and gays in the military, but most would not go so far as to support gay marriage. The Democratic Party was only willing to take the issue so far. When it addressed gay rights, the party usually treated it as an equal rights issue. Chris Anders of the American Civil Liberties Union observed: “Most Democrats are hoping to neutralize the issue and for it to go away. Democrats are not going to run their campaigns on the issue. Since they want it to go away, we [the ACLU] try to make it as difficult [for them] as we can” (Anders interview).

The Democratic Party platform in 2000 did argue for stricter punishment for hate crimes and pledged its support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act “to end workplace discrimination against gay men and lesbians.” It also stated its overall support for gay rights, “[W]e support the full inclusion of gay

and lesbian families in the life of the nation” (Democratic National Committee 2000). The platform did not, however, explain what policies that statement included. In that year’s primary, Bill Bradley and Al Gore were competing for gay and lesbian support in the form of both votes and money. Both candidates for the Democratic nomination held fundraisers with gay donors (Seelye 1999). Virginia Apuzzo of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute said, “[W]e have progressed from the status of a marginal minority that politicians shunned to that of a constituency whose votes are being aggressively pursued – at least by some candidates” (2000). Just like the Christian Right in the early 1980s, gay men and lesbians were happy to be “invited to the table.”

Every Republican candidate for the presidential nomination in 2000 opposed the prospect of gay men serving openly in the military, and the platform reflected this position: “We believe the military must no longer be the object of social experiments. We affirm traditional military culture. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.” The platform then addressed the issue of same-sex marriage and its support of The Defense of Marriage Act, “[W]e support the traditional definition of ‘marriage’ as the legal union of one man and one woman, and we believe that federal judges and bureaucrats should not force states to recognize other living arrangements as marriages. We rely on the home, as did the founders of the American Republic, to instill the virtues that sustain democracy itself. That belief led Congress to enact the Defense of Marriage Act, which a Republican Department of Justice

will energetically defend in the courts.” The Republican Party also maintained its position against a specific sexual preference category in equal rights protections: “[W]e do not believe sexual preference should be given special legal protection or standing in law” (Republican National Committee 2000).

George Bush defeated Al Gore in a bitterly contested election. Then, nine months into Bush’s presidency, the United States experienced the most devastating terrorist attack in its history. Americans united and the focus shifted away from domestic issues toward national security. On the state level, however, major changes were occurring with regard to same-sex marriage. The most stunning case was Massachusetts. On February 4, 2004, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples had the right to legally marry under the Massachusetts State Constitution. This landmark ruling escalated an already heated debate about the rights of gay men and lesbians. By the 2004 elections, candidates were forced to take a position on a once low-level political issue, and the country debated altering the Constitution with an amendment that would clearly define marriage as between one man and one woman.

The 2004 Democratic platform remained clearly in favor of gay rights. However, it fell short of supporting the movement’s most important goals, including same-sex marriage and transgender rights. Instead, the Democratic Party focused on the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment which would define marriage in the Constitution as a union of a man and a woman. The Democrats opposed tampering with the Constitution and used this argument as

their main premise for opposing the amendment: “We support full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits, and protections for these families. In our country, marriage has been defined at the state level for 200 years, and we believe it should continue to be defined there. We repudiate President Bush’s divisive effort to politicize the Constitution by pursuing a ‘Federal Marriage Amendment’” (Democratic National Committee 2004). Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, the Democratic nominee for president, was a lukewarm supporter of gay rights. Kerry had a history of supporting some gay rights initiatives; however, like the party as a whole, he did not support gay marriage or gender non-discrimination laws (for transgender people).<sup>3</sup>

The 2004 Republican platform continued its trend of being both vocal and explicit in its objection to same-sex marriage and gay men in the military, as well as other gay rights policies:

We strongly support President Bush’s call for a Constitutional Amendment that fully protects marriage, and we believe that neither federal nor state judges nor bureaucrats should force states to recognize other living arrangements as equivalent to marriage. We believe, and the social science confirms, that the well being of children is best accomplished in the environment of the home, nurtured by their mother and father anchored by the bonds of marriage. We further believe that legal recognition and the accompanying benefits afforded couples should be preserved for that unique and special union of one man and one woman which has historically been called marriage.

Then the platform took aim at activist justices on the state and local level stating: “Attempts to redefine marriage in a single state or city could have

<sup>3</sup> Kerry supported an amendment to the Improving America’s Schools Act prohibiting federal funds “for instructional materials, instruction, counseling, or other services on school grounds, from being used for the promotion of homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative” (1994).

serious consequences throughout the country, and anything less than a Constitutional Amendment, passed by the Congress and ratified by the states, is vulnerable to being overturned by activist judges” (Republican National Committee 2004).

In the 2004 elections, the issue of gay rights took center stage as the Republican and Democratic Parties had clearly polarized. By 2004, the Republicans were outspoken critics of virtually all policies promoted by gay rights SMIGs. The Democratic Party maintained a consistent stance of civil rights for gay men and lesbians, even though the party did not substantially increase its commitment to this issue between 1988 and 2004, as evidenced by the Democratic Party’s national platforms.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter seeks to examine the polarization of the Democratic and Republican Parties over the policy agenda of the gay rights movement. The Democratic Party accepted the movement (with limitations) and the Republican Party vigorously rejected it. The Democratic Party was subsequently established as the home party for the gay rights SMIGs.

The Democrats were the first of the parties to address gay rights in their platform. The Democratic Party initiated a relationship with gay rights supporters in 1980 and strengthened that relationship in 1984 with specific proposals in its platform. Despite this fact, and its consistent pro-civil rights

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stance, the Democratic Party platform did not substantially increase its commitment to gay rights between 1988 and 2000.

The Republican platform remained silent on the issue of gay rights until 1992. However, then, the party spoke out against gays in the military and sexual orientation as a civil rights category. From that year through the 2004 platform, the Republican Party has become increasingly vigorous in its opposition to all the major gay rights initiatives including minority status for gay men and lesbians, gay marriage, and many other equal rights measures. The influence of the Christian Right within the party is reflected in the party's anti-gay rights policies. The explicit exclusion of any support for gay rights in the Republican Party platform clearly leaves most gay rights advocates completely dependent on their home party, the Democratic Party, if they choose to remain in politics.

## **CHAPTER FIVE - GAY RIGHTS SMIGS AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

Chapter Four established that the Democratic Party became the home party for the gay rights SMIGs. This chapter explores the implications of that relationship for contemporary gay rights SMIGs in reference to claims three and four. In claim three, I argue that SMIGs experience tension between the broader movement (which demands adherence to its ideology) and political parties and the political system (which continually demand compromise). In claim four, I argue that resources provide leverage for SMIGs that can mitigate their dependence on the home party. The chapter begins with an overview of the gay rights SMIGs in this study (“the players”). I will then explore the access that SMIGs have to the Democratic Party. Next, I examine the resources that pro-life SMIGs have to leverage in their relationship with the home party in the policymaking process. I will investigate the distinctive relationship that SMIGs have with both the home party and the broader movement and how these relationships affect the SMIGs’ ability to translate their policy agenda into policy change. Finally, I examine two important gay rights policy areas, same-sex marriage and transgender rights, to assess the extent to which gay rights SMIGs influence the legislative agenda in Congress, as well as the Democratic Party platform.

Applying the same standard to gay rights SMIGs that I used for pro-life SMIGs in Chapter Three, I argue that SMIGs are limited in their ability to influence policy because they are bound by the movement ideology, police

each other on adherence to that ideology, and are accepted by one party and rejected by the other. SMIGs rely on the home party to achieve their policy goals in Congress, so the degree to which political parties respond to the SMIGs can depend on their resources.

The focus of this chapter is the SMIGs that emerged from the gay rights movement. These SMIGs began to form in the 1970s when the gay rights movement gained momentum. The following groups were repeatedly mentioned in my interviews as the major national gay rights interest groups:

- The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)
- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (LLDEF)
- The Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
- The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
- The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund
- The Log Cabin Republicans (LCR)
- The National Stonewall Democrats (SD)

There are two other groups in this study that did not emerge from the Gay Rights Movement: The American Civil Liberties Union – Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, and the National Organization for Women (NOW). Access to, and affiliation with outside SMIGs and interest groups can be a valuable resource for SMIGs. I have included these groups in the study because they view the gay rights movement as important to their organization, have incorporated gay rights as one of their main issues, and according to my

interviews with other gay rights players, have become major players in the gay rights struggle on the national level.

### **The Players**

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), founded in 1973, is the oldest gay rights interest group in this study. NGLTF seeks to “build the political power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community from the ground up,” and strives “to build the grassroots political power of the LGBT community to win complete equality” (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2007). NGLTF lobbies on all levels of government and attempts to mobilize grassroots support. It is perhaps best known for its policy institute, which is a valuable resource for all gay rights SMIGs. The policy institute publishes original research on a wide range of gay rights issues including civil rights, voting, and legislative activity. In addition to research, NGLTF has spearheaded several substantial gay rights victories. In 1975, NGLTF was instrumental in persuading the U.S. Civil Service Commission to allow openly gay men and lesbians to work in government (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). In 1991, NGLTF led a successful boycott of Cracker Barrel Restaurants, which had fired a number of employees upon learning that they were gay. NGLTF does not endorse candidates and is generally more purist than many of the other large gay rights organizations in this study, such as the Human Rights Campaign (Haider-Markel interview). As I will discuss later in this chapter,

NGLTF has been highly critical of HRC's willingness to compromise on certain fundamental gay rights issues like transgender rights.

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (LLDEF) was founded in 1973 with the mission of "achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact, litigation, education and public policy work" (Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund 2007). LLDEF is fashioned after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), trying to establish legal precedents for the benefits of individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGBT). With offices in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta, LLDEF's cases address a wide spectrum of gay rights issues, including employment discrimination, anti-gay initiatives, gay marriage, anti-sodomy laws, HIV/AIDS discrimination, inheritance rights, child custody and domestic partnership benefits. LAMBDA's goals are not aimed at reshaping public opinion about gay men and lesbians, but rather to ensure equal treatment by government of all individuals regardless of sexual orientation (Boxall 1997). LLDEF's budget in 1999 was \$5.5 million with a membership of more than 25,000 people (Chibbaro 1999).

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), founded in 1981, is currently the main lobbying organization on behalf of gay rights issues. HRC's mission is "to improve the lives of GLBT Americans by advocating for equal rights and benefits in the workplace, ensuring families are treated equally under the law and increasing public support among all Americans through innovative

advocacy, education and outreach programs” (Human Rights Campaign 2007). With twelve full-time lobbyists, it has the most prominent presence and greatest access to legislators in Washington. HRC drafts legislation, communicates with members of Congress, mobilizes grassroots supporters, educates, and recruits individuals for political service. Eric Stern of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) calls HRC “the biggest and most powerful gay rights organization” (Stern interview). It covers the widest range of gay rights issues and has the largest budget and staff of the gay rights SMIGs. In 2001, HRC’s budget topped \$21 million with a membership of 400,000 (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). Alvaro Arce of the Democratic Steering Committee says HRC is “regarded as the one big player. It is the one group that represents their [LGBT] interests nationwide” (Arce interview). When I interviewed Congressional staffers about which gay rights groups lobby them and which groups they regularly meet with, HRC was invariably the first and sometimes the only group mentioned (Morganstern and Rosengarten interviews). Additionally, Congressional insiders hold HRC in high regard: “Without HRC, we wouldn’t have the number of co-sponsors we have” (Rosengarten interview).

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is the media watchdog for the gay rights movement. Founded in 1985 as a local group in New York City, GLAAD expanded to a national organization in 1994. GLAAD recognizes that the media is a powerful tool that can help shape public opinion about gay men and lesbians. It polices negative representation and promotes positive representation of gay men and lesbians in all areas of the media.

GLAAD honors those who support or work for fair representation of gay men and lesbians in the media and criticizes those who provide poor, biased, or inaccurate representations. According to its mission statement, GLAAD is “dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation” (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) 2007). Other gay rights SMIGs praise GLAAD’s work: “Its ability to influence the media has resulted in increased public acceptance of gay culture. The media has incredible power and they [GLAAD] have incredible power over the media” (Knox interview). “They are not shaping the policymaking process but work for increased cultural understanding. They shape public image and preferences. They get rid of negative stereotypes” (Haider-Markel interview). GLAAD is certainly the most prominent gay rights SMIG with regard to crafting a positive public image of gay men and lesbians. Later in this chapter, I will discuss public opinion as one of the gay rights SMIGs’ most valuable resources.

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, founded in 1991, is a political action committee (PAC) that provides support to recruit and elect gay and lesbian candidates on all levels of government. It claims that; “[G]ay men and lesbians are the most underrepresented group in electoral politics” (DeBold 1994, xiii). It works to fund, select, recruit and train potential gay and lesbian candidates. Due, in part, to the efforts of the Victory Fund, there has been a tremendous rise in gay and lesbian representation at all levels of government. In 1991,

there were only 49 openly gay elected officials; today there are 275. The Victory Fund supports candidates who meet the following criteria: they must be openly gay/lesbian, endorse the Federal Gay/Lesbian Civil Rights Bill and support and advocate for aggressive public policy on AIDS education, treatment and research. They must command a strong base of support outside of the lesbian and gay community, have a demonstrated ability to organize and raise money, have a legitimate chance to win, and finally, they must express a pro-choice position on abortion. The abortion issue seems out of place but, explained Robin Brand of the Victory Fund, “[I]t’s historical. The board members are from HRC and Emily’s list and had a pro-choice agenda.” Brand further stated that this is an issue that the Victory Fund might revisit but she hopes that they keep their pro-choice stance because she believes that both the gay rights and the pro-choice movements should present a united front (Brand interview). Membership in the Victory Fund requires a \$100 donation with a pledge to donate an additional \$100 to at least two candidates that have been endorsed by the Victory Fund. In 1996, Victory Fund membership was more than 3,500 people who collectively donated \$1.3 million (Rimmerman 2002). By 2001, it had more than 9,000 members and contributed more than \$2 million to gay and lesbian candidates nationwide (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

The Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) is the largest of the few gay and lesbian organizations associated with the Republican Party. It has had a local presence since the 1970s but the national organization formed in 1990 and

officially became the Log Cabin Republicans in 1995. Despite their identity as gay men and lesbians, members of the Log Cabin Republicans align with the ideology of the Republican Party on most other issues including crime, the economy, foreign policy, small government, and free markets. "The LCR believes that the Republican Party better represents their views" (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002, 107). LCR's mission statement reads:

To work within the Republican Party to advocate equal rights for all Americans, including gays and lesbians. Log Cabin's mission derives from our firm belief in the principles of limited government, individual liberty, individual responsibility, free markets and a strong national defense. We emphasize that these principles and the moral values on which they stand are consistent with the pursuit of equal treatment under the law for gay and lesbian Americans...We are loyal Republicans working for change within the party. Through education and action, we demonstrate that gay and lesbian Republicans can, in a spirit of solidarity and integrity contribute substantially to building and sustaining a majority Republican Party and a great nation (Log Cabin Republicans)

The LCR tend to endorse Republican over Democratic candidates even though these candidates do not often support their cause. For example, in 1996, LCR-endorsed Bob Dole, who famously returned its \$1,000 donation. LCR does not automatically support the Republican candidate, however, and after the ultra-conservative 1992 convention, LCR refused to endorse George H.W. Bush. In 2001, LCRs budget was about \$1,000,000 and it had a staff of 7 (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

The National Stonewall Democrats (SD) was formed in 1998 in response to gay Republican groups like the Log Cabin Republicans. One of SD's priorities is to educate the public about the differences between political parties on gay and lesbian issues as well as lobbying and educating Democratic

officeholders. SD has a strong grassroots component and it educates and trains local activists to help Democratic candidates who support LGBT issues to win office. It also provides campaign support to these individuals. SD's website states: "Stonewall is America's only grassroots Democratic LGBT organization. We focus on creating change in three ways: educating the LGBT community about the differences between political parties; mobilizing the LGBT community to get out to vote on Election Day for fair-minded Democrats; and standing up when Republicans attack our families and our civil rights while we lead the Democratic Party to continue improving its record on issues important to our community" (National Stonewall Democrats 2007). By 2001, SD had more than 20,000 members in more than sixty state clubs (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

As the gay and lesbian movement has institutionalized, it has developed strategic alliances with interest groups that have incorporated gay rights issues onto their agenda. Such relationships are critical for the continued success of the gay rights movement and its SMIGs. One significant alliance is with the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW is a visible, highly recognizable interest group and as such is an asset to gay rights SMIGs. NOW has come to see the relevance of gay rights to its organization and goals. Founded in 1966, NOW has a membership of more than 500,000 with chapters in all fifty states. In the case of NOW (and the women's movement in general), lesbian rights were originally excluded from the woman's rights agenda (Evans 1979) because the women's movement was largely composed of white middle

class women. However, lesbian rights have become one of NOW's "priority issues" (National Organization for Women 2007). Olga Vives of NOW calls lesbian rights a "core issue regarding sexual destiny...it has to be part of our civil rights" (Vives interview).

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is another strategic ally of the gay rights SMIGs. It is a multi-issue organization that primarily uses litigation to defend groups whose freedom of expression, privacy rights, or other constitutional rights are threatened. The ACLU focuses on national legislation as well as litigation, education, and coordination of state legislative efforts. The ACLU's efforts complement Lambda Legal's. It currently has active court cases on gay student discrimination, equality in education for students and teachers, health care and health benefits for gay men and lesbians, discrimination, and gender identity protection for transgender individuals, and same-sex marriage, adoption, foster care, and child custody for gay men and lesbians (American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) 2007).

### **Access to the Democratic Party**

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the Democratic Party clearly took a positive, albeit tentative stand on gay rights in the 1980s. While it may not subscribe to all of the movement's goals, the Democratic Party has established formal mechanisms for addressing gay rights issues, which has further cemented its role as the home party of the gay rights movement. The party has created offices to specifically address gay rights issues: the Democratic

National Committee (DNC) Office of Gay and Lesbian Outreach, the Senate Democratic Steering Committee, and the DNC Gay and Lesbian Caucus.

The DNC established the Office of Gay and Lesbian Outreach in 1992. It is the movement's liaison to the Democratic Party. The Outreach Office seeks to develop and maintain relationships with gay rights groups on all levels of government. It also works to increase voter turnout among the gay and lesbian community, advertise, and enhance the party's message of inclusion.

The Senate Democratic Steering Committee created the Office of Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender Outreach in 2002. Although it is new, the Office of LGBT Outreach performs a critical function for gay rights SMIGs by keeping them informed about their issues and providing them with access to Democratic Senators. The Steering Committee engages in relationship building by trying to establish contacts in each organization. It reaches out to and informs the groups about developments in their issue area, and refers them to Senators who are working on their issue. The inclusion of the Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Outreach represents a victory for gay rights advocates who now have an established place within the Democratic Party. There are no such offices within the Republican Party that communicate with the LGBT community (Arce, Nieto and Stern interviews).

The Democratic National Committee now has a Gay and Lesbian American Caucus that represents LGBT voters at the conventions as well as the regular DNC meetings. Although the Caucus has a role in the convention and platform committees, the DNC did not designate the Gay and Lesbian

Caucus as one of the official operating caucuses. This designation would have given it a place on the DNC Executive Committee. Many gay and lesbian activists have criticized the partial inclusion of the Gay and Lesbian American Caucus. Gloria Nieto summed it up as just “window dressing” (Nieto interview).

In addition to the specific offices that include gay and lesbian issues, the Democratic Party has also established quotas to include a certain percentage of minorities as state delegates to the national convention. Some state party organizations have included gay men and lesbians under the heading of minorities and added LGBT to other minority categories like women, African Americans, and Latinos (Haider-Markel interview). Further, some state Democratic Parties (e.g. Ohio), have adopted policies specifically calling for the inclusion of gay men and lesbians in their delegation (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

### **Access to the Republican Party**

SMIGs are accepted by their home party but another critical component is the fact that they are rejected by the opposing party. The case of the Log Cabin Republicans is an excellent example of the battle SMIGs have to wage to gain entry into the opposing party.

The relationship between the LCR and the Republican Party is fragile (as is the relationship between the Log Cabin Republicans and other gay rights SMIGs). Among gay rights SMIGs, the Log Cabin Republicans appear to be misunderstood and disliked, according to my interviews. They share the basic

goal of the gay rights movement -- full equality for gay men and lesbians -- but are trying to accomplish it within a Republican Party that explicitly rejects gay and lesbian rights in its platform and policy agenda.<sup>1</sup> Most gay rights SMIGs criticize the Log Cabin Republicans' affiliation with the Republican Party and cannot understand why the LCR would continually try to reach out to a party in which it is not welcome. Chris Barron, Political Director of the LCR, justifies its position by arguing that the Democratic Party also has many shortfalls on gay rights policy: "First, there are anti-gay forces not just in the Republican Party but in the Democratic Party as well. In Georgia and Oklahoma State Houses that are Democrat-controlled, the House and Senate passed serious anti-gay legislation. There are even Democrats who are co-sponsors of the Federal Marriage Amendment" (Barron interview).

It is puzzling why a group would attempt to forge an affiliation with the Republican Party when the party platform and overall policy remains explicitly anti-gay rights. Barron explains that the LCR members are Republicans "for some of the same reasons as everyone else. We want a small federal government" (Barron interview). Harry Knox of Freedom to Marry observed, "They are Republican first, gay second" (Knox interview). Eric Stern, Director of the Democratic National Committee Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Outreach elaborated, "They are fiscally conservative, socially conservative, they have been raised in religious families and religion plays a strong role for them. They identify culturally with the Republican Party" (Stern

<sup>1</sup> I will explore this point later with the Republican platform.

interview). Ultimately, for this group of gay men and lesbians, the issue of smaller government is more salient to them than their sexual identity.

The Log Cabin Republicans do not view themselves as excluded from the Republican Party. Barron claims, “We have been and continue to be welcomed in the Republican Party.” However, he admits, “Certainly we have a long way to go in the Republican Party. There is an extreme right that holds a lot of sway” (Barron interview). The other gay rights SMIGs disagree – particularly in reference to George W. Bush, who Eric Stern of the DNC calls “the most openly anti-gay president in United States history” (Stern interview). Barron responds, “The President made a bad decision endorsing this amendment [The Federal Marriage Amendment] but he is not the most anti-gay president. He has appointed openly gay people and banned discrimination of gay men and lesbians. With eight years of Clinton, all we wound up with was the DOMA [Defense of Marriage Act] and ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ (Barron interview). If the relationship between the GOP and the LCR is better than it appears, gay rights activist Gloria Nieto of Llego<sup>2</sup> is quick to point out, “They have plenty of access to the White House but no leverage” (Nieto interview). In contrast, the other gay rights SMIGs have virtually no access to the Bush Administration. Chris Anders of the American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian and Gay Rights Project says, “On this issue [gay rights], we don’t bother...we don’t have a liaison in the White House” (Anders interview). The lack of access that

<sup>2</sup> Llego is a National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization founded in 1987. It operates on all levels of government from the national to the local on a host of issues affect Latinos including AIDS education, immigration issues and education (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002).

gay rights SMIGs have to the White House is a stark contrast to the pro-life SMIGs who have regular access, particularly through the weekly meetings with Congresspersons and White House representatives. There are, according to Barron, an estimated 1,000,000 gay and lesbian Republicans in the United States. Subsequently, Barron concludes, "We are never going to leave the party" (Barron interview).

### **Resources**

All interest groups must wait for political parties in Congress to put their issue on the agenda. This becomes even more important with polarizing issues, as SMIGs rely specifically on the home party to forward their agenda in Congress. Resources are a critical tool that SMIGs can use to leverage their relationship with political parties that can facilitate access as well as influence the policymaking process. Although all interest groups strive to exert leverage and gain access to political parties, SMIGs are limited because they can really only affect their home party as a vehicle for policy change inside government. The opposing party rejects them despite the resources they possess. However, gay rights SMIGs do have some leverage in their relationship with the Democratic Party. This is evident in the resources used to put pressure on the political party including money, support in Congress, public opinion, electoral power and radical gay rights groups.

Gay rights SMIGs have a significant amount of money to support Democratic candidates. Eric Stern of the DNC states, "The gay and lesbian

community has been a great financial supporter of the Democratic Party” (Stern interview). Several gay rights SMIGs have PACs that donate to political campaigns and the majority of these donate exclusively to Democratic candidates. In 1992, gay voters and organizations contributed more than \$2 million to Bill Clinton’s presidential campaign. Rahm Emanuel, Clinton’s national finance director, commented, “[The gay rights groups are] highly politicized, with fundamental health and civil rights concerns. And it contributes money. All that makes for a potent political force indeed” (Schmalz 1992a, 20).

In 2004, the Human Rights Campaign donated \$1,050,178 (91% of its total donations) to Democratic candidates. HRC’s contributions to party committees reflect the same trend. In 2004, 96% of HRC’s donations went to Democratic Party-affiliated committees (Political Money Line 2007). Mark Perriello of HRC remarks, “In 1980, we couldn’t find anyone to take the money, now they [the Democrats] line up at the door” (Perriello interview). Schmalz adds, “For years, politicians of all stripes hid or returned financial contributions from homosexuals for fear of being tainted. Today, they seek them out” (1992a, 19).

Not only do gay rights SMIGs favor the Democratic Party, it is often pointless to donate to the Republican candidate – the candidate rarely will support LGBT issues and sometimes will not even accept the funds. In the 1996 Presidential race, Republican nominee, Bob Dole, received a \$1,000 donation from the Log Cabin Republicans. Dole’s aides returned the donation saying that Dole was opposed to accepting funding from groups that have a

“special agenda” (Holmes 1995). However, the Log Cabin Republicans have found some Republican candidates who are willing to receive their support including: Rudy Giuliani in his 2000 Senate race; gay Republican Representative James Kolbe (AZ), Senator Arlen Specter (PA), Senator John McCain (AZ), and Representative Christopher Shays (CT) (Political Money Line 2007).

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund also has a PAC. While the Victory Fund’s own contributions are small,<sup>3</sup> the real numbers are in their successful use of “bundling” contributions to candidates. Bundling is a legal campaign finance tactic that helps organizations circumvent campaign finance laws and limits. An interest group collects individual donations from its members and sends them to the candidate as a package (bundle). In this way, interest group members accomplish two goals. First, they are still making a direct contribution to the candidate of their choice. Second, the donors are sending a message to the candidate that they also support the policy position of the interest group that bundles the contribution. The Victory Fund screens candidates and shares the list of qualified candidates with its members. It then encourages members to donate through the Victory Fund to the candidates. By effectively exploiting

<sup>3</sup> Its total spending for 2004 was only \$18,445, and it only gave to 5 Democratic candidates. In 2002, the Victory Fund’s total disbursements were \$11,299, again all to Democrats. In 2000, it gave \$21,845 to Democratic candidates but almost half of that amount (\$9362) went to Tammy Baldwin, the openly gay representative from Wisconsin. That same year, the Victory Fund donated \$9,819 to Jim Kolbe, the openly gay Republican representative from Arizona. Again in 1998, the Victory Fund gave \$34,162 to Democratic candidates (\$10,325 of it to Tammy Baldwin) and the only donation to a Republican campaign was to Jim Kolbe (\$516) (Political Money Line 2007).

this strategy, the Victory Fund has steered more than \$3.5 million since 1991 toward gay and lesbian political candidates (Brand interview).

Gay rights SMIGs also rely on their supporters in Congress. In addition to Democratic members of the House and Senate who support gay rights issues, there are some moderate Republicans who do as well (e.g. Chris Shays, R-CT; Lincoln Chafee, R-RI). The most vocal gay rights supporters are the openly gay Congresspersons including Representative Barney Frank, D-MA; Representative Jim Kolbe, R-AZ; and Representative Tammy Baldwin, D-WI. In addition to direct support, there are many Congresspersons who may indirectly support gay rights issues when they are included within a larger policy debate. One example is the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA). Many Congressmen claim to be arguing against tampering with the Constitution, rather than for gay rights. Many of the representatives who are against a Constitutional ban on same-sex marriage are at the same time opposed to same-sex marriage. The greatest professed concern for these legislators is adding amendments to the Constitution, but the result is that they fall on the same side of the issue as gay rights advocates.

Despite being misunderstood and disliked by many of the other gay rights groups, the Log Cabin Republicans actually serve an important function for gay rights SMIGs as the liaison between them and the Republican Party efforts. At the time of these interviews -- up until the 2006 elections -- there were about 45 moderate Republicans in Congress who were willing to support at least some gay rights issues. The Log Cabin Republicans encourage a

bipartisan approach to issues which are important to the gay rights SMIGs.

Stern comments, “[T]he Log Cabin Republicans are doing great things because they are trying to build opposition to the Federal Marriage Amendment within the Republican Party” (Stern interview).

Public opinion is critical to any social movement and the interest groups that spring from it. There is a point at which politicians can no longer avoid an issue, due in part to shifts in public opinion. This phenomenon can be witnessed with regards to the gay rights issue over the last 25 years -- and particularly within the past five years -- as gay rights SMIGs have won over public opinion to a significant extent. Gay rights SMIGs have also benefited from increasingly favorable public opinion on the gay rights issue. Although American attitudes concerning gay rights policy, homosexuals, and homosexuality remained static during the 1970s and 1980s, these same indicators rose dramatically in the 1990s toward a more positive opinion of gay men and lesbians as well as for their civil rights (Brewer 2003; Wilcox and Norrander 2002). This shift is attributable in part to the media, which has portrayed gay men and lesbians in an increasingly positive light as well as the efforts of GLAAD (Wilcox and Wolpert 2002). Additionally, as more and more gay men and lesbians identify themselves as such, opinions of those who know them have changed. This is in direct contrast to the pro-life issue, which has not witnessed any substantial change in public opinion over the last thirty years (Bowman interview). Pollsters argue that knowing someone who had an abortion, for example, does not tend to change one’s opinion about abortion in

general. However, knowing someone who is gay often results in a positive attitude shift about homosexuals at large (Herek 1984; Simon 1995; Bowman interview). Signorile comments, “[I]ts clear that we are winning. Most Americans now know who we are and a great many have changed their minds in our favor on a number of issues” (Signorile 1999, 24).

In 2002, the Gallup organization duplicated a public opinion poll that had been conducted in 1977, asking the same three questions regarding homosexuality and gay rights. The responses demonstrate the extent to which public opinion has shifted in favor of gay rights over the past twenty-five years. First, Gallup asked, “As you may know, there has been considerable discussion in the news regarding the rights of homosexual men and women. In general, do you think homosexuals should or should not have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?” In 1977, 56% of those surveyed said yes, that gay men and lesbians should have equal rights. By 2002, 86% believed that they should have equal rights. In 1977, Gallup asked, “Do you think homosexual relations between consenting adults should or should not be legal” and 43% responded that it should be legal. In 2002, the number of those agreeing that homosexual relations should be legal rose to 52%. Finally, Gallup asked “In your view, is homosexuality something a person is born with or is homosexuality due to other factors such as upbringing or environment?” In 1977, only 13% of those polled believed that homosexuality was something a person was born with contrasted with 56% who attributed homosexuality to environment, or upbringing. However, by 2002, the percentage of those believing homosexuals were born

that way was 40% and those attributing homosexuality to environment and upbringing dropped twenty percentage points to 36% (Newport 2002).

While public opinion has steadily shifted to a more favorable position toward gay men and lesbians, there is still significant variation by issue. For example, Gallup found that “support for the legal rights of homosexuals and support for non-discrimination against homosexuals is very high, while support for homosexuality as a lifestyle choice or sanctioning is much lower overall” (Newport 2002, 1). One area where public opinion is not particularly favorable is same-sex marriage. In July, 2003, a CNN/USA Today/Gallup survey asked “[W]ould you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as being between a man and a woman, thus barring marriages between gay or lesbian couples?” 50% of respondents said they would favor such an amendment (Moore 2004). Again in December 2003, Gallup asked respondents, “Do you think marriage between homosexuals should or should not be recognized by law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriage?” 65% of respondents said that same-sex marriage should not be valid (Moore 2004). Although acceptance of gay men and lesbians has increased on a social level, public opinion clearly draws the line on issues like gay marriage. As far as public opinion has come on the issue, the American public does not appear to be willing to support all gay rights measures.

Despite this, the LGBT community has significant and increasing leverage in the electoral arena. Gay and lesbian voters comprise approximately 4% of the voting population. This number has grown steadily as more and

more voters self-identify as gay or lesbian. Further, participation in politics of openly gay individuals has increased as well. For example, gay delegates at the Democratic National conventions increased from 77 in 1980 to practically double that number in 1992 (Bull and Gallagher 1996). As far as voter mobilization, "The LGBT community is an extremely powerful voting bloc....Exit polling in 2000 asked people to identify themselves as straight or gay. 4.3 million identified themselves as gay or lesbian and of that, 3.1 million voted for Gore. Seven percent of the total Gore vote was from LGBT people...in a close election, they can be the margin of victory (Stern interview). Haider-Markel adds, "They can promise that 70-80% of gay and lesbian voters will vote Democratic. They can deliver those votes. That is huge" (Haider-Markel interview). Dubbed the "Lavender Vote" (Hertzog 1996), LGBT voting power can be a potent force, particularly in urban areas where it tends to be concentrated. For example, Smith (1999) estimates that the number of LGBT registered voters in San Francisco is somewhere between 17% and 20%. The voting power of the LGBT population is also significant in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston and Washington D.C. (Smith and Haider-Markel 2002). As a group, gay men and lesbians tend to vote overwhelmingly Democrat. In 1990, 61% of LGBT voters voted Democrat and by 1998, that number was at 85% (Bailey 2000). Approximately 75% of LGBT voters voted for Bill Clinton in 1992 (Bull and Gallagher 1996). These levels have clearly made them a formidable voting bloc.

As to grassroots activity, a few of the national gay rights SMIGs acknowledge that there must be a multi-level approach to their issue to affect social change. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the National Stonewall Democrats are engaged in the most prominent grassroots organizing efforts of the gay rights SMIGs. NGLTF's Creating Change Conference brings together local gay rights organizers from across the United States – one of the few opportunities for them to network. NGLTF is considered the leader among the gay rights SMIGs in this area: “NGLTF's strength is at the grassroots, especially training, defeating anti-gay ballot measures and introducing pro-gay ballot measures. They are great organizers” (Stern interview). NGLTF conducts much of its organizing at the state and local level. The Stonewall Democrats also recognize the need for a multi-tiered approach. One Democratic Party insider describes the Stonewall Democrats as “the grassroots heart and soul of the Democratic Party...they have chapters everywhere, especially in gay cities. They have been a force behind making the Democratic Party listen to LGBT issues. They demanded a seat at the table” (Stern interview).

While grassroots efforts may appeal to a broader audience, radical SMIGs can also play an integral role in inserting certain gay-rights issues into the national discussion. Zald and McCarthy argue, “Extremism in one part of the movement helps leaders in another part” (1979, 3). If the radicals continue to suggest extreme policy proposals and engage in more unconventional and confrontational politics, demands by other groups appear tame in comparison,

and subsequently more palatable to Congress. Both Act-Up and Queer Nation are radical groups that serve to remind policymakers of the extremes to which the gay rights movement can move. This helps persuade policymakers to work with the mainstream gay rights SMIGs.

Act-Up and Queer Nation engage in movement-style politics and operate outside of the mainstream. They are remnants of the movement. AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) was founded in 1987 in New York City in response to the AIDS epidemic. Its heyday was in the late 1980s and early 1990s when it had more than 100 chapters in the United States and Europe. ACT UP uses radical and disruptive tactics and is generally unwilling to compromise on its basic principles. An example of its radical approach was in 1990 when members of ACT UP/Boston and ACT UP/New York protested outside the Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston where eleven men were being ordained priests. The protesters threw condoms at attendants, pretended condoms were the Eucharist and simulated acts of anal and oral sex. ACT UP dismissed criticism of its tactics as “a matter of style” (Dawson 1990). Queer Nation’s tactics can be even more radical and confrontational. In 1992, after then-Governor Wilson of California vetoed a bill outlawing job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, Queer Nation threw police barricades through windows and set fires in protest (Cunningham 1992).

Of all the resources that gay rights SMIGs possess to exert leverage on the Democratic Party, the most potent is public opinion. Since the 1970s, public opinion has been steadily moving in a direction favorable to most gay rights

issues, with the exception of same-sex marriage and transgender rights.

Money, support in Congress and voter mobilization are also modest leverage tools for gay rights SMIGs. All of these resources are compromised, however, by the Gay Rights SMIGs dependence on the Democratic Party, as well as the Republican Party's outspoken position against gay rights. Sean Cahill of NGLTF comments that; "Even with a Democratic President and Congress, we couldn't get the legislation passed. We need the Democrats and we need their support but we don't have a lot to show for it" (Cahill interview). The political climate created by the Bush administration and a Republican Congress had made the situation even worse. As Hon. Barney Frank (D-MA) notes, "[T]he conclusion is indisputable: as long as the Republicans have a majority in the House of Representatives, no legislation favorable to gay causes will ever be allowed to come to a vote" (2004, 12).

### **The Broader Movement vs. the Party**

The ever-present tension between the goals of the broader movement and the home party is particularly acute in the case of gay rights SMIGs and the Democratic Party. Unlike the relationship between the pro-life movement and the Republican Party, which are much closer ideologically, the Democratic Party does not support several key issues of the gay rights movement. This becomes very clear when studying the issues of transgender rights and same-sex marriage.

Most gay rights SMIGs cited the Human Rights Campaign as a group that has gotten too close to the Democratic Party and has been too willing to compromise with the party on key issues to achieve policy success. As HRC has grown closer to the Democratic Party and more adept at the political process, it has developed a reputation among the other gay rights interest groups as a “sell-out.” At the same time, the other gay rights SMIGs rely on HRC’s access to Congress. Often HRC is the only gay rights SMIG that meets with the representatives in Washington. HRC’s willingness to compromise affects all gay rights SMIGs and its efforts to achieve policy success have sometimes disrupted the delicate balance that all SMIGs must keep between the broader movement and the Democratic Party. In reality, HRC does compromise on some issues but has been resolute on others. It has clearly compromised with the political party on transgender issues, but has refused to waiver on same-sex marriage. Nevertheless, the other gay rights SMIGs tend to criticize HRC for compromising the goals of the movement in the interest of policy success (Haider-Markel interview).

Transgender rights remains an especially contentious category of issues between the broader gay rights movement and the Democratic Party. Today, most gay rights SMIGs include homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals (LGBT) as part of the movement, but that was not always the case. While gay rights advocates have come to see transgender issues as critical, most of mainstream America as well as representatives in Congress do not even know what transgender means. The Transgender Law

and Policy Institute defines transgender in the following way, “We use the term ‘transgender’ in its most inclusive sense, as an umbrella term encompassing: pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative transsexual people; cross-dressers; feminine men and masculine women; and more generally, anyone whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations of masculinity or femininity” (Transgender Law & Policy Institute 2007).

The gay rights SMIGs unwillingness to compromise on transgender issues has clearly been a factor in legislation being debated in Congress. It is also an issue with individual legislators who are otherwise supportive of gay issues but draw the line at transgender rights. The NGLTF, in particular, has supported the inclusion of transgender language since the issue surfaced about 15 years ago. However, the Human Rights Campaign accepts the limitations on issues like transgender rights. “HRC is resistant to it, they are realistic politically...when you try to include this language, legislators balk at it...transgender is taking it too far” (Haider-Markel interview). Danielle Rosengarten, legislative aid to Congressman Chris Shays, says that groups may push to include transgender rights in legislation, but legislators cannot include it if they want a bill to pass. “Groups might come with a bill that is great in concept but we have to rein them in...we have to balance the needs of different groups. We have to concede some issues. It has to morph from what the group wanted to what we can do” (Rosengarten interview). To that end, HRC regards itself as pragmatic, “One bill wouldn’t pass if we included transgender so we took it out. You have to take what you can get” (Perriello

interview). Smith and Haider-Markel conclude, “[T]ransgendered persons have not received the same amount of acceptance or support for specific legislation” (2002, 162). Mixner adds:

There’s a tendency among the more moderate parts of our coalition to try to stifle the more adventurous parts, lest the latter make the American public feel uncomfortable. Some would exclude transgendered people, others would shut out the leather community or other subgroups, all in the name of building alliances with the mainstream world. That crosses the line. We cannot surrender some people’s rights and privileges in order to make our allies – or ourselves – feel more comfortable. We must not homogenize our coalition down to its least threatening manifestation, our lowest common denominator, just to ‘keep up appearances.’ To do that would be to sacrifice our manifold identities as individuals (2000, 10).

Unlike the transgender issue, same-sex marriage is one issue on which most gay rights SMIGs will not compromise. This is a relatively new issue for gay rights interest groups, having emerged primarily over the past five years. Prior to the focus on marriage, most gay rights SMIGs lobbied for legislation on civil unions or piecemeal rights related to marriage benefits (e.g. health benefits and adoption). Harry Knox of Freedom to Marry explained how same-sex marriage became such an important issue:

It was really the conservative interest groups that caused us to focus on marriage. In 1996 a bunch of right wing Christian organizations came clean that they were having an existential crisis. Abortion was topping out. The fight had moved to partial birth abortion and the country was at a stalemate. There was nothing new to scare people about so they were out of issues. They hit on gay marriage as a hot button...at that time, no national LGBT organization was calling for marriage. We were running away from that issue. It came out of the conservative organization’s need to raise money. LGBT people didn’t ask for it. It came out of a search for a new imminent threat for Conservatives...Evan [Evan Wolfson, President and Founder of Freedom to Marry] felt for some time that marriage is what we should be asking for. We would seek the societal imprimatur. It began to crystallize for him because every time we talked about another issue, the Christian Right said that we were

ultimately going for marriage. Marriage is so overriding an issue that we ought to be using it as the central rallying issue and it would bring all the other issues in its wake (Knox interview).

Once the possibility of marriage for gay men and lesbians was established, gay rights SMIGs have been unwilling to settle for anything less. “Civil Unions are now considered a conservative fallback” (Knox interview). As a result, HRC is standing firm on the issue of marriage. Mark Perriello of HRC says: “The majority of the groups want marriage and won’t settle. HRC is not willing to compromise, which is a new position for us to be in. It’s really about the Constitution. We believe that civil unions will relegate gay men and lesbians to second class citizens” (Perriello interview). Haider-Markel says that people in the movement are saying; “This is one area where we have to stand alone. The Democrats won’t stand with us” (Haider-Markel interview). Political activist David Mixner explains:

I was being presented with the classic dilemma for anyone engaged in a movement for human rights: At what point should we be politically practical – when should we compromise principle and accept less-than-perfect solutions in order to preserve access to the people in power, and the ability to effect change from the inside of the process? Now in today’s political climate, compromise has become almost a goal in itself. We place such a high value on reaching a consensus that people who hold steadfast to their beliefs are not praised for their integrity but instead labeled as unreasonable, intransigent, or uncooperative. It’s an issue with which we all struggle, and it’s not a new struggle. Leaders of social movements have always wrestled with how to do the right thing while remaining politically prudent. Some leaders have risen to the challenge and succeeded in surviving politically and maintaining their commitment to justice. Others have seen their careers flounder after they stood up to be counted in times of great decision (2000, 10).

Faced with a dilemma – compromise the goals of the broader movement to gain support of the home party or stand firm -- the major gay rights SMIGs appear

willing to sacrifice transgender rights to advance the more mainstream goals of the gay rights SMIGs. Same-sex marriage is different. While at first a pipedream for gay rights SMIGs, it has become an issue upon which they will not compromise. However, the Democratic Party has remained unwilling to endorse this issue, failing to mention it in the party platform.

### **Conclusion**

The Democratic Party became the home party of gay rights SMIGs in 1980 when it formally added sexual orientation to its civil rights statement in the National Party platform. Additionally, the Republican Party has vigorously rejected gay rights issues in its national platform since 1992. This acceptance by the Democratic Party, and rejection by the Republican Party, forces gay rights SMIGs to work almost exclusively with the Democratic Party if they want to realize their policy agenda in Congress.

As such, they do not have a viable exit option. This aspect of the relationship between SMIGs and political parties is critical to understanding their behavior. Without the political party's representatives pleading their case in Congress, gay rights SMIGs are unable to translate their policy agenda into policy change. Gay rights SMIGs are subsequently forced to compromise with their home party. This relationship comes at a price to movement goals.

However, gay rights SMIGs also remain bound to the goals of the broader movement. Unlike the pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party, which have very similar agendas, gay rights SMIGs and the Democratic Party have

very different policy priorities that include transgender rights and same-sex marriage. This clearly stifles progress because congresspersons who are willing to support gay rights are at the same time unwilling to include transgender rights. The gay rights SMIGs are faced with a hard choice: sacrifice transgender and make progress in the political arena or stay faithful to the goals of the broader movement. For now, gay rights SMIGs seem to be opting for political progress.

Finally, resources matter and gay rights SMIGs with resources have a much better chance of exerting some leverage over the home party. Some resources are derived from public opinion about the movement. Positive public opinion elevates the chances of policy success for all gay rights SMIGs. Haider-Markel notes that “there is a huge cultural component to the movement” (2006). In other cases, resources relate to the individual groups. In the case of the Human Rights Campaign, these resources are money and access. HRC’s presence in Washington D.C. is significant -- its access and power can affect the other gay rights SMIGs negatively. Since they often disagree with HRC’s conciliatory stance, the message reaching Congress is not necessarily one shared by all SMIGs. Ultimately, the effectiveness of all resources is compromised since gay rights SMIGs are dependent on the Democratic Party. The party in turn, has become somewhat complacent with the gay rights SMIGs. As a result, their donations, endorsements, and other leverage become less significant.

Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts observes, “[T]he difference between the Democrats and the Republicans on gay rights is one of the sharpest issues separating the two political parties...for the past twenty years, the two national political platforms have been virtual opposites on gay issues, with the Democrats strongly supportive and the Republicans militantly in opposition” (2004, 11). This research reveals that the Democratic Party, although clearly the home party of the gay rights movement, is not as “strongly supportive” as Representative Frank would like to think. Harry Knox of Freedom to Marry, more accurately reflects the conclusions of this research, “Democrats tolerate us because they know we vote for them, but except in places where LGBT communities are large and organized, they are not our immediate friends like the Christian Right is with the Republican Party” (Knox interview).

## CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

Historically, social movements have engaged in disruptive tactics in order to gain recognition and attention for their issues. These tactics, when combined with the moral weight of the issue itself often serve to polarize the two major political parties. I set out to demonstrate that the pro-life and gay rights movements followed this course when they caused the Republican and Democratic Parties to polarize around their respective issues. The importance of the gay rights and pro-life issues has not diminished over time, and has been particularly acute during election periods when presidential politics and platform statements have accentuated partisan differences.

### **Between Two Masters**

This dissertation evaluates the role of pro-life and gay rights social movement interest groups in the policymaking process. Specifically, I examine the opposing influences of the home party and the social movement as SMIGs attempt to translate their policy agenda into policy change. My research demonstrates that both the home party and the broader social movement fundamentally constrain these groups. I found that the broader movement tends to pull SMIGs in a more ideologically pure direction, while the political parties attempt to influence the SMIGs to compromise on their issues in order to make measured progress.

### The Home Party

For the pro-life and gay rights movements, I compiled a political history which involved content analysis of the Republican and Democratic Party platforms from 1968 to 2004. The content analysis enabled me to identify when the parties addressed the issues, the level of polarization on the issues, and how each party's position changed over time. I supplemented the content analysis with an examination of presidents and presidential politics on abortion and gay rights. My research confirmed that each political party's acceptance of a movement – coupled with the opposing party's rejection – served to firmly establish a home party for the SMIGs that had emerged from these movements. I argue that SMIGs are constrained because they are bound to their home party, whereas many interest groups seek to work with either party even if they are closer to one. This was confirmed by my interviews. Both pro-life and gay rights SMIGs acknowledged that they maintained a home party relationship with the Republican and Democratic Parties, respectively, and that they had little if any contact with the opposing party.

The analysis of the Republican National Party platforms demonstrated that the Republican Party assumed a strong pro-life position in 1980 and solidified that position in following decades. This position was also reflected in statements made by Republican contenders for the presidency, as well as those who were elected to the office. An important distinguishing feature for SMIGs is not only the acceptance by the home party but also the explicit rejection by the other party. This was demonstrated in the pro-life case when,

during the same time period, the Democratic Party assumed an opposing position. Since 1980, the two political parties have continued to diverge over the issue of abortion.

The case of the gay rights movement is different. Although the Democratic Party assumed a pro-gay rights position in its platform by 1980, the process of polarization was different. Whereas the abortion issue quickly produced opposing sides between political parties after *Roe v. Wade*, the Republican Party failed to even acknowledge the gay rights issue in its platform until 1992 (twelve years later). Once the Republican Party addressed the gay rights issue, however, it took a particularly strong position. In the 1992 platform, the Republicans supported the Boy Scouts of America's exclusion of homosexuals, rejected minority status for gay men and lesbians, and opposed same-sex marriage.

### The Broader Movement

As discussed in Chapter One, many scholars argue that a social movement wanes after it institutionalizes and forms interest groups. Both the pro-life and gay rights movements support those findings. However, I also found that rather than concluding that the social movement declined, SMIGs consider the movement to have transformed from an active, disruptive phase to a latent phase. Although the movement was no longer present in any tangible way, it still existed for the SMIGs. After institutionalization, the movement consisted primarily of the group of SMIGs that emerged from the movement, as

well as the memory of the legitimating authority that the movement once held during its active phase. The influence of the broader movement on the actions and decisions of both sets of SMIGs as well as with policymakers was evident. Throughout the course of my interviews with executives at both the pro-life and gay rights SMIGs, individuals repeatedly referenced the movement, movement goals, and their need to comply with those goals. Whether or not the movement actually wanes, it continues to exert an influence on the SMIGs in the policymaking process.

### **Compromise and Leverage**

I next explored whether it was necessary for the SMIGs to compromise the broader movement's goals in order to work within the political process. In both cases, pro-life and gay rights SMIGs reported that working within the political system (Congress in particular) did in fact necessitate compromise. Virtually all SMIGs noted a constant tension between the need to satisfy the movement's goals and the parties' desire to seek compromise on their issue. However, the required level of compromise varied both across the two areas as well as among SMIGs in each area primarily as a result of resources.

Groups generally tend to lean towards the party and away from the broader movement if they have less leverage (i.e. fewer resources). Conversely, groups with greater resources tend to remain truer to the goals of the broader movement. There are exceptions to this general rule, however. The Human Rights Campaign, for example, has vast resources relative to other

gay rights groups, however, the HRC has repeatedly compromised broader movement goals to pass legislation (e.g. transgender rights). The Family Research Council also has plentiful resources but often refuses to compromise with the Republican Party.

My assessment of these cases is that they really are not contradictions at all. First, the strength of the gay rights movement is less than that of the Christian Right. HRC may be making a valid assessment of the length to which it can push the Democratic Party on the issue. Likewise, FRC might assess its influence, coupled with that of the Christian Right as strong enough to sway the Republican Party on certain issues.

SMIGs possess a wide array of resources that can be divided into two categories: collaborative and coercive resources. Collaborative resources involve services that SMIGs deliver to political parties. Coercive resources involve services that enhance SMIG's bargaining position with the home party. Collaborative and coercive resources can overlap but together they include: mobilizing voters, mobilizing opposition, the liaison function both within Congress and between Congress and SMIG membership, recruiting and training candidates, strength of the movement, public opinion, strategic alliances with other groups, radical SMIGs and money.

This research revealed that pro-life SMIGs had greater resources than gay rights SMIGs. The most prominent resources for pro-life SMIGs included mobilizing voters as well as mobilizing opposition, the liaison function, recruiting and training candidates, money, radical SMIGs, electoral power, strength of the

movement overall and alliance with the Christian Right movement in particular. Although gay rights SMIGs had fewer resources they did have an extensive system of recruiting and training. Additionally, funding and electoral power were both significant resources but only in urban areas with high concentrations of gay men and lesbians. Gay rights SMIGs also had several powerful radical SMIGs as well as a significant alliance with women's rights groups. The strongest resource for gay rights SMIGs however, was the increasingly favorable public opinion toward gay men and lesbians.

Both pro-life and gay rights SMIGs used their resources effectively in the lobbying arena. Each movement had a few SMIGs that acted as the movement representatives in Washington. Groups such as Human Rights Campaign and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force for gay rights and the Christian Coalition and National Right to Life Committee on the pro-life side, exercised a strong voice in the policymaking process, according to accounts from Democratic and Republican Party insiders. However, the presence of five different Legislative Service Organizations gave the pro-life groups substantially more access and exposure to Republican legislators than the one LSO did for the gay rights SMIGs, as evidenced by my interviews with politicians and SMIGs.

### **Success in the Policymaking Arena**

I found that both sets of SMIGs mitigate dependence on the home party and its policy priorities through resources. However, some SMIGs are more successful than others in the policymaking process. In examining the factors

which might account for this difference, I found that policy success stemmed from the number of resources and the quality of the relationship with the home party.

In the case of pro-life SMIGs, these groups have been closely ideologically aligned with the Republican Party position since the early 1980s. Subsequently, the need for compromise has been minimal. Republican Party operatives initially targeted the pro-lifers as a potential new corps of Republican voters -- virtually assuring access to the party. The Republican Party engaged in a deliberate strategy to entice Catholics away from the Democratic Party and encourage evangelical Protestants to become active in partisan politics. At the time of my interviews (between 2002 and 2005), pro-life SMIGs were a well-established contingent in the Republican political arena. Although the Republican party and pro-life SMIGs have clashed on occasion, the basic policy goals remain the same and continue to be reflected in the Republican Party platform.

In addition to the strong relationship between the Republican Party and the pro-life position, the affiliation between the pro-lifers and the Christian Right movement has only served to enhance the access and visibility of pro-life SMIGs. The pro-life movement became intertwined with the Christian Right movement by the early 1980s and soon became almost a sub-movement of the Christian Right. It is important to note, however, that while the power, influence, and resources of the Christian Right may have sustained the pro-life SMIGs, it has also substantially changed many of them. The pro-life movement has

come to be associated with the other positions of the Christian Right (which does not reflect the position of all pro-life groups) including the support for the death penalty and opposition to contraception and sex education. These groups also differed on the roots of their conservatism, leading them to support different programs to reduce or eliminate abortion based on either a fiscally or socially conservative philosophy.

In contrast to the generally cooperative relationship that has developed between pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party, the gay rights SMIGs often lobby for a policy agenda that the Democratic Party refuses to address. Gay rights SMIGs are subsequently forced to eliminate certain items from their agenda in order to achieve larger policy goals. Issues like same-sex marriage and transgender rights are not broadly supported by Democratic Congressmen. Further, the Democratic platform has failed to advocate for gay rights issues in any substantial way with the exception of the 1992 platform. As a result of the negative response these proposals received, they were largely excluded from the 1996 platform. Today the Democratic Party supports legislation barring discrimination of gay men and lesbians but generally fails to advocate for other key movement goals. The insistence of gay rights SMIGs to continue to lobby for contentious movement goals is presently a losing proposition in Congress. The chasm between the policy goals of the broader gay rights movement and those of the Democratic Party is vast.

There has never been a deliberate effort to recruit gay rights SMIGs and their supporters into the Democratic Party as there was with the Republican

Party and pro-lifers. The Democratic Party took on the gay rights issue more by default as the party was already affiliated with the women's and pro-choice movements. Still the Democratic Party has never fully embraced the gay rights movement and its core policy priorities. Additionally, even though there is support for gay rights policy from the women's movement, women's rights SMIGs have not taken up the gay rights issue to the degree that the Christian Right did when it moved abortion to the top of its agenda. Further, there has been no great outcry for gay rights legislation within Congress (even among liberal Democrats).

Ultimately, the research showed that the link between pro-life SMIGs and the Republican Party was much stronger than the one between gay rights SMIGs and the Democratic Party. I conclude that pro-life SMIGs are in a better position to exert greater leverage based upon their resources and strong relationship with the Republican Party. The case of the Schumer Amendment shows the kind of pressure and influence that the pro-life SMIGs can effectively exert to alter legislation in Congress. However, it must be noted that the relationship between the pro-life movement and the Republican Party was initiated by the Party. By the 1980s, the pro-life issue and courting pro-life voters became central to the Republican political strategy – enabling pro-life SMIGs to enjoy greater access to the party.

The home party relationship between the Democratic Party and gay rights SMIGs is clearly weaker than that of the Republican Party and the pro-life movement. While I used the term “embrace” to describe the Republican Party's

incorporation of pro-life SMIGs and their agenda, in the case of the Democrats and the gay rights SMIGs, it is more accurately described as acceptance. The pro-life movement tapped into the power and leverage of the Christian Right and advanced many pressing pro-life agenda items in Congress. The Democratic Party has failed to wholeheartedly support the gay rights issue and has specifically shied away from support of same-sex marriage and transgender rights which indicates that the commitment to the issue is limited.

### **Further Research**

Further study is needed to form more general conclusions about SMIGs and their relationship with both the broader movement and the home party. The women's rights movement might be a logical place to start, as well as those cases that represent the flipside of this study including the pro-family movement (against gay rights) and the Republican Party, and the pro-choice movement and the Democratic Party. Examining the other side of each would help to highlight if there are political party differences in interest group relations. For example, one question that this research does not explore is whether the culture of the Republican Party simply tends to establish stronger relationships with interest groups than the Democratic Party.

Also, the cases presented in this dissertation represent not only different types of relationships between the SMIGs and the home parties but different stages of development of the SMIGs themselves – the age of the movement. It appears that the gay rights movement is still maturing, with both parties highly

polarized on the issue. The Republican Party remains thoroughly opposed to gay rights policy and the Democratic Party continues to offer lukewarm support for some gay rights issues. The abortion issue, while still highly salient for both political parties, seems to be breaking down. The 2006 midterm election in particular revealed that there are both pro-choice Republicans and pro-life Democrats. The question becomes, does polarization fade over time?

The 2006 midterm elections and the actions of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress provide an interesting framework to continue this research. It appears that political party polarization on abortion decreased in 2006. On the Republican side, there is an increasingly strong pro-choice contingent within the party that asserts its position, particularly at the national convention (although its proposals never make it to the platform). Additionally, many of the Republican Governors and other political party notables are pro-choice, including Rudy Giuliani, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Christi Todd Whitman and George Pataki. The pro-life SMIGs also seem to be moderating on the issue. Pro-life activists have been increasingly willing to adopt a more incremental approach to abortion policy. This phenomenon was reflected in my interviews with the National Right to Life Committee and the Christian Coalition. In addition to the incremental approach, very few pro-lifers are focusing on an outright ban on abortion, but rather on certain issues such as late-term abortion or restricting abortion access with specific conditions (waiting periods, parental consent).

The Democratic Party is still clearly pro-choice but it seems to be increasingly willing to accept differing viewpoints within its ranks. Some political

pundits speculate that the Democratic hard line position on abortion is hurting the party. The party may be searching for middle ground on the issue. The Democrats position on abortion was, until recently, unabashedly pro-choice, and the consensus was that the Democratic Party was not a hospitable environment to pro-lifers (Doanne interview). Now, Democrats are attempting to moderate on the abortion issue. In his 2004 Democratic Convention speech, John Kerry did not speak strongly about abortion rights. In fact, it was Kerry who later suggested that the Democrats run more pro-life candidates to eschew the public perception that the Democratic Party “likes” abortion. DNC Party Chair Howard Dean has added to this strategy by framing abortion differently with statements like “we’re not the party of abortion” (Ponnuru 2006). In the 2006 elections, the Democratic Party attempted to establish a big tent approach to abortion – inviting pro-life Democrats back to the party. Statements on abortion have been softened to appeal to the majority of Americans who support abortion rights but not under all circumstances. Bill and then Hillary Clinton’s statement that “abortion should be safe, legal and rare” reflects this new position.

Ultimately, SMIGs can only be successful when they learn to work within the parameters of the political party apparatus without abandoning the ideological roots of their social movement. Resources mitigate the need for compromise but ultimately the strength of the relationship with the home party is the key factor influencing incorporation of the SMIG’s issues on the home party’s policy agenda.

## APPENDIX I - LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Anders, Chris, Federal Policy Director and Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union – Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, interview by author, Washington, D.C., 15 April 2004.

Arce, Alvaro, Democratic Caucus – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Division, interview by author, Washington, D.C., 4 June 2004.

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Maher, Brigid, Policy Analyst on Marriage and Family, Family Research Council, interview by author, Washington, D.C. 29 January 2003.

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Perriello, Mark, Political Action Committee Associate Director, Human Rights Campaign, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 17 April 2004.

Racalto, Joe, Legislative Assistant to Hon. Barney Frank, interview by author, Washington, D.C. 30 April 2004.

Rosengarten, Danielle, Legislative Assistant to Hon. Christopher Shays, interview by author, Washington, D.C. 30 April 2004.

Saunders, William, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Human Life and Bioethics, Family Research Council, interview by author, Washington, D.C. 29 January 2003.

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## APPENDIX II – GAY RIGHTS PLATFORM STATEMENTS

### STATEMENTS ABOUT GAY RIGHTS IN THE NATIONAL PLATFORMS OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES<sup>1</sup>

YEAR	DEMOCRAT	REPUBLICAN
2004	<p>We support full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits, and protections for these families. In our country, marriage has been defined at the state level for 200 years, and we believe it should continue to be defined there. We repudiate President Bush's divisive effort to politicize the Constitution by pursuing a "Federal Marriage Amendment." Our goal is to bring Americans together, not drive them apart.</p>	<p>The sound principle of judicial review has turned into an intolerable presumption of judicial supremacy. A Republican Congress, working with a Republican president, will restore the separation of powers and re-establish a government of law. There are different ways to achieve that goal, such as using Article III of the Constitution to limit federal court jurisdiction; for example, in instances where judges are abusing their power by banning the use of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance or prohibiting depictions of the Ten Commandments, and potential actions invalidating the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Additionally, we condemn judicial activists and their unwarranted and unconstitutional restrictions on the free exercise of religion in the public square.</p> <p>We strongly support President Bush's call for a Constitutional amendment that fully protects marriage, and we believe that neither federal nor state judges nor bureaucrats should force states to recognize other living arrangements as equivalent to marriage. We believe, and the social science confirms, that the well-being of children is best accomplished in the environment of the home, nurtured by their mother and father anchored by the bonds of marriage. We further believe that legal recognition and the accompanying benefits afforded couples should be preserved for that unique and special union of one man and one woman which has historically been called marriage.</p> <p>After more than two centuries of American jurisprudence, and millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of</p>

<sup>1</sup> The search included any time the word "sex" appeared in the platform alone or as part of another word (included same-sex, homosexual, etc.)

		<p>civilization, the union of a man and a woman in marriage. Attempts to redefine marriage in a single state or city could have serious consequences throughout the country, and anything less than a Constitutional amendment, passed by the Congress and ratified by the states, is vulnerable to being overturned by activist judges. On a matter of such importance, the voice of the people must be heard. The Constitutional amendment process guarantees that the final decision will rest with the American people and their elected representatives. President Bush will also vigorously defend the Defense of Marriage Act, which was supported by both parties and passed by 85 votes in the Senate. This common sense law reaffirms the right of states not to recognize same-sex marriages licensed in other states.</p> <p>President Bush said, "We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench and try to remake America by court order." The Republican House of Representatives has responded to this challenge by passing H.R. 3313, a bill to withdraw jurisdiction from the federal courts over the Defense of Marriage Act. We urge Congress to use its Article III power to enact this into law, so that activist federal judges cannot force 49 other states to approve and recognize Massachusetts' attempt to redefine marriage.</p> <p>We affirm traditional military culture, and we affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.</p>
<p><b>2000</b></p>	<p>The very purpose of hate crimes is to dehumanize and stigmatize - not only to wound the victim, but also to distort the American conscience. Every crime is a danger to Americans' lives and liberty. Hate crimes are more than assaults on people, they are assaults on the very idea of America. They should be punished with extra force. Protections should include hate violence based on gender, disability or sexual orientation. And the Republican Congress should stop standing in the way of this pro-civil rights, anti-crime legislation.</p> <p>Al Gore and the Democratic Party know</p>	<p>The new Republican government will renew the bond of trust between the Commander-in-Chief, the American military, and the American people. The military is not a civilian police force or a political referee. We believe the military must no longer be the object of social experiments. We affirm traditional military culture. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.</p> <p>The family is society's central core of energy. That is why efforts to strengthen family life are the surest way to improve life for everyone.... We support the traditional definition of "marriage" as the</p>

	<p>that much remains to be done. We must remember we do not have an American to waste. We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.</p> <p>We support continued efforts, like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end workplace discrimination against gay men and lesbians. We support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of the nation. This would include an equitable alignment of benefits. We recognize the importance of new battles against forms of discrimination and disadvantage that stand as barriers to communities and families, such as environmental injustices and predatory lending practices. And we will fight for full funding and full staffing of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other civil rights enforcement agencies so they can do their job of ensuring that America lives up to its creed of equal rights and equal opportunity for all.</p>	<p>legal union of one man and one woman, and we believe that federal judges and bureaucrats should not force states to recognize other living arrangements as marriages. We rely on the home, as did the founders of the American Republic, to instill the virtues that sustain democracy itself. That belief led Congress to enact the Defense of Marriage Act, which a Republican Department of Justice will energetically defend in the courts. For the same reason, we do not believe sexual preference should be given special legal protection or standing in law.</p>
<p><b>1996</b></p>	<p>Fighting discrimination and protecting civil rights. Today's Democratic Party knows we must renew our efforts to stamp out discrimination and hatred of every kind, wherever and whenever we see it. . We must remember we do not have an American to waste. We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation....We support continued efforts, like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end discrimination against gay men and lesbians and further their full inclusion in the life of the nation.</p>	<p>We oppose Bill Clinton's assault on the culture and traditions of the Armed Forces, especially his attempt to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.</p> <p>The sole source of equal opportunity for all is equality before the law. Therefore, we oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, creed, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti discrimination statutes. We reject the distortion of those laws to cover sexual preference, and we endorse the Defense of Marriage Act to prevent states from being forced to recognize same-sex unions. Because we believe rights inhere in individuals, not in groups, we will attain our nation's goal of equal rights without quotas or other forms of preferential treatment. We scorn Bill Clinton's notion that any person should be denied a job, promotion, contract or a chance at higher education because of their race or gender. Instead, we endorse the Dole-Canady Equal Opportunity Act to end discrimination by the federal</p>

		government. We likewise endorse this year's Proposition 209, the California Civil Rights Initiative, to restore to law the original meaning of civil rights.
<b>1992</b>	We don't have an American to waste. Democrats will continue to lead the fight to ensure that no Americans suffer discrimination or deprivation of rights on the basis of race, gender, language, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics irrelevant to ability.	<p>We also stand united with those private organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America, who are defending decency in fulfillment of their own moral responsibilities. We reject the irresponsible position of those corporations that have cut off contributions to such organizations because of their courageous stand for family values. Moreover, we oppose efforts by the Democratic Party to include sexual preference as a protected minority receiving preferential status under civil rights statutes at the federal, state and local level.</p> <p>We oppose any legislation or law that legally recognizes same-sex marriages and allows such couples to adopt children or provide foster care.</p> <p>However, we oppose liberal Democrat attempts to place women in combat positions just to make an ideological point. Unlike the Democratic Party and its candidate, we support the continued exclusion of homosexuals from the military as a matter of good order and discipline.</p>
<b>1988</b>	WE BELIEVE that we honor our multicultural heritage by assuring equal access to government services, employment, housing, business enterprise and education to every citizen regardless of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicapping condition or sexual orientation; that these rights are without exception too precious to be jeopardized by Federal Judges and Justice Department officials chosen during the past seven years <by a political party increasingly monolithic both racially and culturally> more for their unenlightened ideological views than for their respect for the rule of law.	nothing
<b>1984</b>	A new Democratic Administration will understand that the age-old scourge of discrimination and prejudice against many groups in American society is still rampant and very much a part of the	nothing

	<p>reason for the debilitating circumstances in which disadvantaged peoples are forced to live. Although strides have been made in combating discrimination and defamation against Americans of various ethnic groups, much remains to be done. Therefore, we pledge an end to the Reagan Administration's punitive policy toward women, minorities, and the poor and support the reaffirmation of the principle that the government is still responsible for protecting the civil rights of all citizens. Government has a special responsibility to those whom society has historically prevented from enjoying the benefits of full citizenship for reasons of race, religion, sex, age, national origin and ethnic heritage, sexual orientation, or disability.</p> <p>We reaffirm the dignity of all people and the right of each individual to have equal access to and participation in the institutions and services of our society. All groups must be protected from discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, language, age, or sexual orientation. We will support legislation to prohibit discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation. We will assure that sexual orientation per se does not serve as a bar to participation in the military. We will support an enhanced effort to learn the cause and cure of AIDS, and to provide treatment for people with AIDS. And we will ensure that foreign citizens are not excluded from this country on the basis of their sexual orientation.</p>	
<b>1980</b>	<p>We must affirm the dignity of all people and the right of each individual to have equal access to and participation in the institutions and services of our society. All groups must be protected from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, language, age, sex or sexual orientation. This includes specifically the right of foreign citizens to enter this country. Appropriate legislative and administrative actions to achieve these goals should be undertaken.</p>	nothing

**APPENDIX III – ABORTION PLATFORM STATEMENTS**

**STATEMENTS ABOUT ABORTION IN THE NATIONAL PLATFORMS OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES<sup>1</sup>**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>DEMOCRAT</b>	<b>REPUBLICAN</b>
<b>2004</b>	<p>We will defend the dignity of all Americans against those who would undermine it. Because we believe in the privacy and equality of women, we stand proudly for a woman's right to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of her ability to pay. We stand firmly against Republican efforts to undermine that right. At the same time, we strongly support family planning and adoption incentives. Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.</p>	<p>We support protecting the rights of families in international programs and oppose funding organizations involved in abortion.</p> <p>And while the vast majority of Americans support a ban on partial birth abortion, this brutal and violent practice will likely continue by judicial fiat. We believe that the self-proclaimed supremacy of these judicial activists is antithetical to the democratic ideals on which our nation was founded.</p> <p>We oppose school-based clinics that provide referrals, counseling, and related services for contraception and abortion.</p> <p>As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence. That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make it clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p>

<sup>1</sup> This search included the terms “abortion” and “reprod” (to include reproduction, reproductive choice, freedom, etc.) and “sanctity”. These are the three terms that were used over this 20 year period among the parties to address abortion and related policy.

		<p>Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services, and we commend Congressional Republicans for expanding assistance to adopting families and for removing racial barriers to adoption. We join the President in supporting crisis pregnancy programs and parental notification laws. And we applaud President Bush for allowing states to extend health care coverage to unborn children.</p> <p>We praise the President for his bold leadership in defense of life. We praise him for signing the Born Alive Infants Protection Act. This important legislation ensures that every infant born alive – including an infant who survives an abortion procedure – is considered a person under federal law.</p> <p>We praise Republicans in Congress for passing, with strong bipartisan support, a ban on the inhumane procedure known as partial birth abortion. And we applaud President Bush for signing legislation outlawing partial birth abortion and for vigorously defending it in the courts.</p> <p>In signing the partial birth abortion ban, President Bush reminded us that “the most basic duty of government is to defend the life of the innocent. Every person, however frail or vulnerable, has a place and a purpose in this world.” We affirm the inherent dignity and worth of all people.</p> <p>We support the President’s strong efforts to promote adoption through</p>
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<p><b>2000</b></p>	<p>The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of ability to pay. We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans - not government - can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. This year's Supreme Court rulings show to us all that eliminating a woman's right to choose is only one justice away. That's why the stakes in this election are as high as ever.</p> <p>Our goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous. We support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, and policies that support healthy childbearing. The abortion rate is dropping. Now we must continue to support efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, and we call on all Americans to take personal responsibility to meet this important goal.</p> <p>The Democratic Party is a party of inclusion. We respect the individual conscience of each American on this difficult issue, and we welcome all our members to participate at every level of our party. This is why we are proud to put into our platform the very words which Republicans refused to let Bob Dole put into their 1996 platform and which they refused to even</p>	<p>We renew our call for replacing "family planning" programs for teens with increased funding for abstinence education, which teaches abstinence until marriage as the responsible and expected standard of behavior. Abstinence from sexual activity is the only protection that is 100 percent effective against out-of-wedlock pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, when transmitted sexually. We oppose school-based clinics that provide referrals, counseling, and related services for contraception and abortion. We urge the states to enforce laws against statutory rape, which accounts for an enormous portion of teen pregnancy. We support the establishment of Second Chance Maternity Homes, like the ones Governor Bush has proposed, to give young unwed mothers the opportunity to develop parenting skills, finish school, and enter the workforce. Because many youngsters fall into poverty as a result of divorce, we also encourage states to review their divorce laws and to support projects that strengthen marriage, promote successful parenting, bolster the stability of the home, and protect the economic rights of the innocent spouse and children. Finally, because so many social ills plaguing America are fueled by the absence of fathers, we support initiatives that strengthen marriage rates and promote committed fatherhood.</p> <p>The Supreme Court's recent decision, prohibiting states from banning partial-birth abortions — a procedure denounced by a committee of the</p>

<p>consider putting in their platform in 2000: "While the party remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing its historic principles and ideals, we also recognize that members of our party have deeply held and sometimes differing views on issues of personal conscience like abortion and capital punishment. We view this diversity of views as a source of strength, not as a sign of weakness, and we welcome into our ranks all Americans who may hold differing positions on these and other issues. Recognizing that tolerance is a virtue, we are committed to resolving our differences in a spirit of civility, hope and mutual respect."</p>	<p>American Medical Association and rightly branded as four-fifths infanticide — shocks the conscience of the nation. As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence. That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p> <p>Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services, and we commend congressional Republicans for expanding assistance to adopting families and for removing racial barriers to adoption. The impact of those measures and of our Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 has been spectacular. Adoptions out of foster care have jumped forty percent and the incidence of child abuse and neglect has actually declined. We second Governor Bush's call to make permanent the adoption tax credit and expand it to \$7,500.</p> <p>we will protect the rights of families in international programs and will not fund</p>
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<p><b>1996</b></p>	<p>Choice. The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe V. Wade, and regardless of ability to pay. President Clinton took executive action to make sure that the right to make such decisions is protected for all Americans. Over the last four years. we have taken action to end the gag rule and ensure safety at family planning and women's health clinics. We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans -- not government -- can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction.</p> <p>The Democratic Party is a party of inclusion. We respect the individual conscience of each American on this difficult issue, and we welcome all our members to participate at every level of our party.</p> <p>Our goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous. We support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, and policies that support healthy childbearing. For four years in a row, we have increased support for family planning. The abortion rate is dropping. Now we must continue to support efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, and we call on all Americans to take personal responsibility to meet this important goal.</p>	<p>organizations involved in abortion.</p> <p>We therefore will protect the rights of families in international programs and will not fund organizations involved in abortion.</p> <p>The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p> <p>Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services. Republicans in Congress took the lead in expanding assistance both for the costs of adoption and for the continuing care of adoptive children with special needs. Bill Clinton vetoed our adoption tax credit the first time around - and opposed our efforts to remove racial barriers to adoption - before joining in this long overdue measure of support for adoptive families.</p> <p>Worse than that, he vetoed the ban on partial-birth abortions, a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association and rightly branded as four-fifths infanticide.</p>
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<p><b>1992</b></p>	<p>provide for the full range of reproductive choice -- education, counseling, access to contraceptives, and the right to a safe, legal abortion; It is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans -- not government -- can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. The goal of our nation must be to make abortion less necessary, not more difficult or more dangerous. We pledge to support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, and policies that support healthy childbearing and enable parents to care most effectively for their children.</p>	<p>Accordingly, we oppose programs in public schools that provide birth control or abortion services or referrals. Instead, we encourage abstinence education programs with proven track records in protecting youth from disease, pregnancy and drug use.</p> <p>We believe the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life that cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the 14th Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations that advocate it. We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of mothers and offering adoption services. We reaffirm our support for appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p> <p>Because we uphold the family as the</p>

		<p>building block of economic progress, we protect its right in international programs and will continue to withhold funds from organizations involved in abortion.</p>
<p><b>1988</b></p>	<p>That the fundamental right of reproductive choice should be guaranteed regardless of ability to pay</p>	<p>As part of our commitment to the family as the building block of economic progress, we believe decisions on family size should be made freely by each family and remain opposed to U.S. funding for organizations involved in abortion.</p> <p>That the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional, and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed.</p> <p>We applaud President Reagan's fine record of judicial appointments, and we reaffirm our support for the appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p> <p>Values are the core of good education. A free society needs a moral foundation for its learning. We oppose any programs in public schools which provide birth control or abortion services or referrals. Our "first line of defense" to protect our youth from contracting AIDS and other sexually communicable diseases, from teen pregnancy and from illegal drug use must be abstinence education.</p> <p>We commend the Reagan-Bush</p>

		<p>Administration for its courageous defense of human life in population programs around the world. We support its refusal to fund international organizations involved in abortion.</p>
<p><b>1984</b></p>	<p>Reproductive Freedom &lt; The Democratic Party recognizes reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right. We therefore oppose government interference in the reproductive decisions of Americans, especially government interference which denies poor Americans their right to privacy by funding or advocating one or a limited number of reproductive choices only. We fully recognize the religious and ethical concerns which many Americans have about abortion. But we also recognize the belief of many Americans that a woman has a right to choose whether and when to have a child. The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion rights as the law of the land and opposes any constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision. We deplore violence and harassment against health providers and women seeking services, and will work to end such acts. We support a continuing federal interest in developing strong local family planning and family life education programs and medical research aimed at reducing the need for abortion.</p> <p>There can be little doubt that a Supreme Court chosen by Ronald Reagan would radically restrict constitutional rights and drastically reinterpret existing laws. Today, the fundamental right of a woman to reproduction freedom rests on the votes of six members of the Supreme Court &lt; five of whom are over 75. That right could easily</p>	<p>The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortions. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional, and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed.</p> <p>We applaud President Reagan's fine record of judicial appointments, and we reaffirm our support for the appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.</p> <p>As part of our commitment to the family and our opposition to abortion, we will eliminate all U.S. funding for organizations which in any way support abortion or research on abortion methods.</p>

	<p>disappear during a second Reagan term. Already, the protections against employment discrimination have been restricted by the Court; a Reagan Court surely would reduce them further. The same is true for the right of workers to have a healthy and safe workplace, and to organize collectively in unions. Although the statute protecting voting rights has been extended through a massive bipartisan effort, opposed by the Reagan Administration, a Reagan Supreme Court could still effectively nullify it simply by erecting impossible standards of proof. Not long ago, the Court decided it should hire independent counsel to argue that tax exemptions for racially discriminatory schools were unlawful because the Justice Department refused to do so. Can anyone imagine a Reagan Court doing that? How much easier it would be for a Reagan Court simply to agree with a Reagan Department of Justice.</p> <p>If Mr. Reagan is reelected, who would protect women and minorities against discrimination?</p>	
<p><b>1980</b></p>	<p>Reproductive Rights. We fully recognize the religious and ethical concerns which many Americans have about abortion. We also recognize the belief of many Americans that a woman has a right to choose whether and when to have a child.</p> <p>The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion fights as the law of the land and opposes any Constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision.</p> <p>The Democratic Party recognizes reproductive freedom as a</p>	<p>There can be no doubt that the question of abortion, despite the complex nature of its various issues, is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law. While we recognize differing views on this question among Americans in general &lt; and in our own Party &lt; we affirm our support of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children. We also support the Congressional efforts to restrict the use of taxpayers' dollars for abortion.</p> <p>We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of the parents' obligation and right to guide their minor</p>

	<p>fundamental human right. We therefore oppose government interference in the reproductive decisions of Americans, especially those government programs or legislative restrictions that deny poor Americans their right to privacy by funding or advocating one or a limited number of reproductive choices only.</p> <p>Specifically, the Democratic Party opposes involuntary or uninformed sterilization for women and men, and opposes restrictions on funding for health services for the poor that deny poor women especially the right to exercise a constitutionally-guaranteed right to privacy.</p>	<p>children.</p>
<p><b>1976</b></p>	<p>We fully recognize the religious and ethical nature of the concerns which many Americans have on the subject of abortion. We feel, however, that it is undesirable to attempt to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn the Supreme Court decision in this area.</p>	<p>Because of our concern for family values, we affirm our beliefs, stated elsewhere in this platform, in many elements that will make our country a more hospitable environment for family life &lt; neighborhood schools; educational systems that include and are responsive to parents' concerns; estate tax changes to establish more realistic exemptions which will minimize disruption of already bereaved families; a position on abortion that values human life, a welfare policy to encourage rather than discourage families to stay together and seek economic independence; a tax system that assists rather than penalizes families with elderly members, children in day care or children in college; economic and employment policies that stop the shrinkage of our dollars and stimulate the creation of jobs so that families can plan for their economic security.</p> <p>The question of abortion is one of the most difficult and controversial of our time. It is undoubtedly a moral and personal issue but it also involves complex questions relating to medical</p>

		<p>science and criminal justice. There are those in our Party who favor complete support for the Supreme Court decision which permits abortion on demand. There are others who share sincere convictions that the Supreme Court's decision must be changed by a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortions. Others have yet to take a position, or they have assumed a stance somewhere in between polar positions.</p> <p>We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of the parent's obligation and right to guide their minor children. The Republican Party favors a continuance of the public dialogue on abortion and supports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children.</p>
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