

Abortion issue gains momentum at UNLV

By Bonar Tucker
YELLIN' REBEL

A recent poll showed a marked increase in support for legalized abortion among first year college students.

University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute and the American Council of Education have shown support for the issue to be up from 57 percent in 1968 to 65 percent in 1989. Still, the controversy rages with both sides taking strong stands.

"We will transform the pro-choice energy on college campuses into political power at the polls," said Kate Michelman, executive director of National Abortion Rights Action League. "We are looking to students and young people to be the next generation of leaders in this issue."

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Students for Choice President Jacquelin Hamilton said, "We believe women should be able to choose."

Hamilton said she feels the main thrust of the group at this time is to get students on the petition circulating at UNLV, one which now has gathered 69,000 signatures.

This petition will put the is-

sue on the ballot in the November elections giving the people the right to choose.

Without giving the vote to the people, the pro-choice advocates feel there may be a problem.

"State legislature will reconvene in 1991," said Angela Slayton, student at UNLV and member of the group. "If there is disapproval of the current law, it will be stricken and the legislature could make a new, very restrictive law."

Jeanne Maust, spokesperson for Pro-Choice Advocacy said the majority of Nevada's legislature is anti-choice.

"That is not representative of Nevada as a whole," she said. "In a poll taken by University of Nevada Systems in 1989, 78 percent of Nevadans favored having the right to choose."

Maust said she would like the law to be kept within a medical realm and kept out of a political realm.

"People want the right for women to be able to make their own choice," she said.

But Frank Beckwith, a lecturer in philosophy at the university, said he feels it is the job of the government and state to protect the rights that exist for the unborn.

Beckwith began doing research on the subject when he was asked to be on a panel discussing the abortion issue.

After much reading and studying, he developed the opinion that the law is not only against his moral judgement, but it was also a bad decision historically.

"When Justice Blackman cited the 14th Amendment upheld women's rights to have abortions, he failed to recognize that some of the drafters who voted for the 14th Amendment had voted for anti-abortion within their own territories," he said.

Beckwith finds most of his students at UNLV to be what he calls "exception oriented" rather than in favor of "abortion on demand."

"In a public exercise and debate in class, I would say about 60 percent of the students claim to be pro-choice and 40 percent call themselves pro-life at the beginning," he said. "Most people want to permit it in hard cases."

"But when I bring up to the students that, say, the women is in her third trimester of pregnancy and wants an abortion for frivolous reasons, then it becomes morally reprehensible for them," he continued.

Beckwith said it is important for people to understand that the state does not have to protect life in the third trimester.

The distinction in the Roe vs. Wade decision is the state is given the right to protect potential life in the third trimester, but it is not obligated to do so.

"Therefore, a third trimester pregnancy can be terminated legally under Roe vs. Wade," he said.

This could be due to the mother's health.

"And the mother's health," said Beckwith, "is defined so broadly under Doe vs. Bolton as including psychological, emotional, or financial health."

Still, National Organization for Women President Molly Yard, who spoke at UNLV last week, is adamant about abortion continuing to be legal.

"If you can't control your reproductive life, you have no freedom to plan your life and make whatever you will of it," said Yard. "If you're going to be forced to compulsory pregnancy because your birth control fails and abortion is illegal, you are not free."

Other pro-choice members feel this issue is very much an indicator of what the future of our coun-

try will be. They say it is enough that a woman should make the decision within her own family and between her God and herself to work with her own values without having to answer to the values of the lawmakers.

But pro-life advocates say once a child is conceived, the woman has no right to abuse or kill that child.

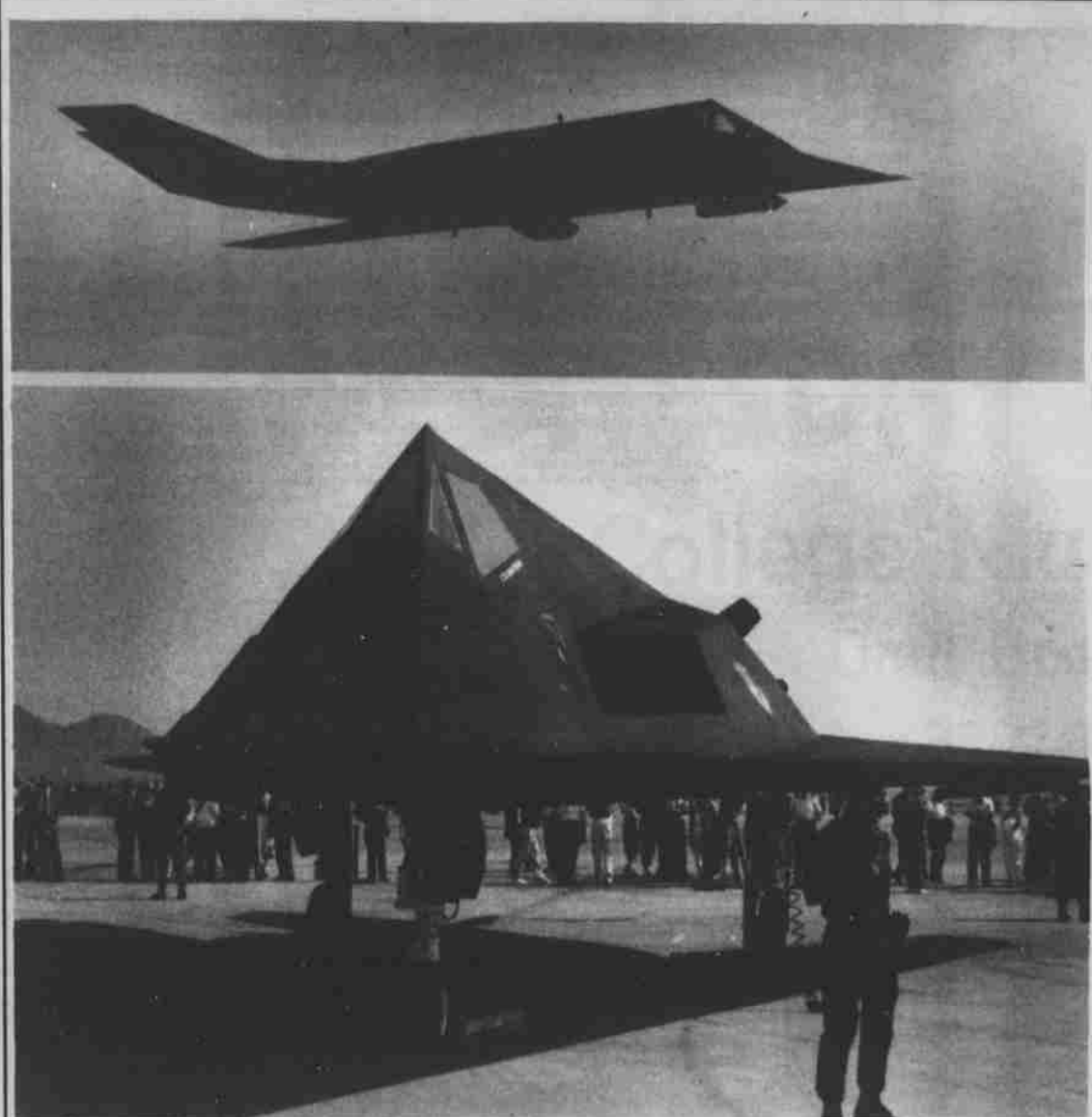
While the controversy spreads on university campuses across the nation, more opportunities to hear both sides arise.

In a recent debate aired on KLVX, Maust said, "I certainly hope you will give the women in this country some credibility and realize that we are able to make our own decisions. This is a fight for freedom, a fight for our very lives."

Women will die and women will pursue abortion," she said, "because women are in the situation of being able to become pregnant and men are not."

Beckwith responded, "And you are not the human being whose life will be snuffed out and violated because of abortion. And that's the fact you must face."

STEALTH FIGHTER UNVEILED



Yell Photo / Robert Anderson

-AWESOME The F-117A Stealth Fighter made its public debut Saturday at Nellis A.F.B. The subsonic plane was an incredible sight when it flew in.

Earth Day

continued from front page

Because...our planet today faces severe environmental crises such as global warming, rain forest devastation, growing world population and water and air pollution.

Because...the planet's future depends on the commitment of every nation, as well as every individual.

Accompanying that message was a green ribbon symbolizing one's commitment to the cause.

Making it easy for the average citizen to help in the earth's preservation is the goal of the group RESPOND, who set up a booth to help spread the word. RESPOND spokesperson Sandy Stone said, "We help people make a difference by making information easily accessible. We need to start having the masses make a difference."

Earth Day maintains a particular significance for Nevada, since it is being considered as the site of the nation's nuclear repository and is an arid desert, using a good deal of water as well as Las Vegas, which according to the EPA ranks fifth highest in the nation for levels of carbon monoxide in the air.

Despite these concerns, all news is not bad for Las Vegas which was officially named a Tree City USA by John Jones the State Forester.

Mayor Ron Lurie, who ac-

cepted street signs and a flag bearing the city's new status, said, "I would like to say on behalf of the city and you [the audience], thank you."

A satellite to the main event took place in front of the Moyer Student Union at 2 p.m. Deemed, "A Student Rally," it included some student concerned groups as well as the big picture.

"Let me begin by recognizing this week as the National Wildlife Week in conjunction with Earth Day," said Governor Bob Miller. "There are a couple of things we should keep in mind. It is not important what we do today, if we do not take action, the next generation will not have what we have."

As a member of the audience Architecture student Eugenie Throckmorton waved a sign saying "DOE = Healthy Planet."

She explained, "They [DOE] are the number one government establishment representing the total denial and indifference to human concerns."

Ironically, Throckmorton said, Earth Day is not really a fitting title because the Earth will go on — without those dwelling upon it.