

Money should fund education, not abortions, pro-life youths protest

WASHINGTON – About 65 young pro-life activists picketed outside the California governor's office demanding taxpayer money be used to fund education and law enforcement – two sectors affected by budget cuts – rather than for organizations that support abortions.

Activists represented Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust, a Christian pro-life youth activist organization. The June protest was part of its 12th annual ProLife Training Camp, which equips high school and college students with practical experience in advocating against abortion in churches, schools, towns and nationwide.

"If abortion is a moral issue, why are taxpayers being forced to pay for abortions rather than fund education?" asked group member Sarah Massell in a press statement.

"Public funds that should be going to ensure our teachers are properly compensated are now going to fund unlimited and unrestricted abortions," she said. "The more we cut resources to our educational system the more it will have a negative impact on future generations."

Cheryl Conrad, co-founder of the group, told Catholic News Service she encourages those born after the Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion nationwide, to consider themselves survivors of abortion.

Since the Roe decision in 1973, one-third of all pregnancies in America have been aborted, according to Conrad. The remaining two-thirds are considered "survivors of the abortion holocaust," she said.

Participants in the group's ProLife camp range in age from 14 to 20 with 90 percent being 14 to 16 years old. "Our mission is to activate young people to speak out to their peers," Conrad said.

Attendees are trained in pro-life apologetics, debate skills, media relations, event

planning and leadership, law enforcement and legal issues, and fetal development. The group also has a campus life team in which young people advocate and recruit at high schools and college campuses.

Toward the end of the camp, attendees practice their skills in real life activism. This year, attendees advocated for their issue outside Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's office.

Schwarzenegger and state lawmakers failed to strike a budget compromise to shrink the state's multibillion budget deficit before the start of the new fiscal year July 1. The current \$26.3 billion deficit is affecting health care, transportation, law enforcement and other state services.

On July 8, the governor announced proposed cuts to the state's welfare-to-work program, CalWorks.

The governor proposed suspending Proposition 98, a constitutional amendment that guarantees a minimum level of funding for K-12 schools and community colleges each year.

Education is the largest program funded by the state general fund. Schools have already dealt with layoffs and cuts to summer school, art, music and sports programs.

Late on July 15, lawmakers' budget negotiations stalled when they couldn't agree on wording to restore funding for education when the budget deficit turns around. Budget talks were expected to resume at a later date.

The state has laid off thousands of government workers and began issuing IOUs in July. It expected to send about \$3 billion worth of IOUs in July to small businesses, local governments and some individuals.

This is the second time since the Great Depression that California has sent out notes promising repayment at a later date.