



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7

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CONSENT CALENDAR

January 15, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Opposition of the Nomination of Richard Honaker to the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming

RECOMMENDATION:

Send a letter to Senators Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein and the Senate Judiciary Committee opposing the nomination of Richard Honaker to the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming.

BACKGROUND:

On March 19, 2007, President Bush nominated Richard Honaker to the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming. Honaker is an attorney and former member of the Wyoming House of Representatives. Numerous reproductive rights and civil rights organizations including the National Organization of Women and NARAL Pro Choice America have expressed strong opposition to Honaker's nomination.

Throughout his legal and legislative careers, Honaker has fought to end legal abortion. In 1991, he introduced the "Human Life Protection Act" which would have banned abortion with an exception only to protect a woman's life or in cases of rape if the attack was reported within five days. Among the bill's findings it included the following statement, "Unborn children are human beings, and abortion is the taking of the life of an unborn child who is a member of the human race". The bill failed, however Honaker continued to push the measure reintroducing it in the legislature. The legislation was also put on the ballot in 1994 and was overwhelmingly rejected by Wyoming voters.

He is also a member of the Federalist Society, a group that has advocated for the overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. He is also supported by many anti-abortion groups.

35 years ago, the United States Supreme Court issued its controversial *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion. Recently this decision has come under attack not only by legislators but also by the courts.

With the future of the *Roe* decision hanging in the balance, appointing judges with strong anti-abortion backgrounds could lead to a ban on legal abortions in our country.

The City of Berkeley has a long history of supporting reproductive rights. It should join NOW, NARAL Pro-Choice America and other organizations in urging the United States Senate to reject Honaker's nomination and stop him from promoting a fundamentalist, anti-abortion agenda from the bench.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington, 981-7170.

Attachments:

1. Proposed letter
2. Information from NARAL Pro-Choice America and NARAL Pro-Choice Wyoming on Richard Honaker

January 16, 2008

Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein,

The Berkeley City Council strongly requests that you reject the nomination of Richard Honaker for the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming.

Throughout his legal and legislative careers, Richard Honaker has fought to end legal abortion. As a member of the Wyoming House of Representatives, Honaker introduced the "Human Life Protection Act" which would have banned abortion with an exception only to protect a woman's life or in cases of rape if the attack were reported within five days. This measure was introduced several times and failed to pass each time. The legislation was also put on the ballot in 1994. Even though Honaker helped put it on the ballot, the initiative was overwhelmingly rejected by Wyoming voters.

In addition to his efforts to make abortion illegal, he has also published articles and given speeches about the right to choose and his judicial philosophy. He has repeatedly suggested that an abortion is equivalent to murder and said that laws should be based on their Christian underpinnings. These statements raise serious questions about his ability to fairly and impartially apply the law.

Additionally, he is supported by many anti-abortion groups and is a member of the Federalist Society, a group that has advocated for the overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

35 years ago, the United States Supreme Court issued its landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion in the United States. In light of recent court decisions and actions by the Bush administration, the right to safe and legal reproductive health choices hang in the balance. Appointing judges with strong anti-abortion backgrounds like Honaker could lead to a ban on legal abortions in our country. That is why many reproductive rights and civil rights organizations including the National Organization of Women and NARAL Pro Choice America have expressed strong opposition to Honaker's nomination.

Please oppose this nomination and instead call on President Bush to nominate a fair-minded individual who shares our country's mainstream views of constitutional rights, including the right to choose.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

