

WASHINGTON WATCH®

“WITH HIS OWN HANDS”

President Bill Clinton came to office saying abortion should be “safe, legal and rare.” Now, apparently, he believes it should be safe, legal and *well done*. How else to explain his stunning move to place an abortionist in the office of Surgeon General of the United States?

He did not, of course, introduce his nominee to succeed Joycelyn Elders as an abortionist. Instead, he offered Henry Foster as the soul of moderation. A quiet, dignified advocate of teen abstinence was the spin that Clinton put on the Tennessee obstetrician/gynecologist. Citing Foster’s “I Have a Future” (IHAF) program in Nashville, the White House sought to calm the nation’s frayed nerves. The only problem here was that IHAF literature makes no mention of abstinence and the program routinely dispensed contraceptives to teens without their parents knowledge or consent. If, as Clinton claimed, IHAF taught teens to delay sexual activity, where is the proof?

About the abortions, there was that problem of numbers. First, they claimed he did one. Then, he was quoted saying it was “fewer than a dozen.” Next, Foster nailed down the figure at 39. That’s not counting the 55 women who aborted following an experiment with an abortifacient drug. He administered the study. He signed the 1985 article describing it. Nor, seemingly, does it count the number cited in his 1978 testimony before a panel of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Then, he said he had done “a lot of amniocentesis and therapeutic abortions, probably near 700.” What is truth? Small wonder even advocates of legal abortion had qualms. Columnist Jeff Jacoby, writing for the very liberal *Boston Globe*, said: “Abortion may be legal, but to much of the mainstream, it remains a sordid and immoral practice...The cold and ugly fact is that Foster himself, with his own hands, has destroyed unborn infants...[T]he most prestigious post in American medicine would be better filled by someone less tainted.”

Planned Parenthood Partner

About Foster’s connection with Planned Parenthood, don’t mention it. Remarkably, the Foster resume first released by the White House made no reference to his twenty years’ association with the world’s largest abortion provider and advocate of sexual liberation. Nor did it refer to Foster’s association with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The foundation has long advocated school-based clinics that dispense contraceptives and refer for abortion.

Foster was no mere name on a letterhead. He spiritedly joined in the most

WHAT IS TRUTH? FOSTER’S CREDIBILITY SHREDDED.

radical of Planned Parenthood’s drives—the “Keep Abortion Safe and Legal Campaign.” Following the modest protections approved by the Supreme Court’s 1989 *Webster* decision, Foster signed up for Planned Parenthood’s effort to make sure that no parental notice law, no waiting period law, no ban on ninth month

abortion law could pass anywhere in America.

Crisis in Medical Ethics

Henry Foster has been “pushing the envelope” on medical ethics for years. In the 1970s, he acknowledged, he had performed involuntary sterilizations on retarded women. Today, such practices are considered unethical, a clear violation of the rules of informed consent. The White House defended Foster.

Then there was the Tuskegee syphilis study. Family Research Council helped publicize Foster’s role in the Macon County (Ala.) Medical Society. The society had given its “surrogate consent” to an experiment which began in 1932. At the instigation of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), hundreds of black men were denied treatment for the devastating venereal disease. The study continued through the 1940s, when the discovery of penicillin could have relieved their suffering. By 1969, when Foster was vice president of the society, the PHS sought to continue the decades-long cooperation with local doctors. Although the medical society was tiny—12 members—and although he has been placed by a witness at a key meeting, Foster has denied all knowledge of the Tuskegee syphilis study. The White House “would like nothing better” than a full discussion of Henry Foster’s record. They will get it.

What You Can Do

- Contact your two U.S. Senators. Also, contact Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), Chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee. Write: The Hon. _____, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Or call 202.224.3121.

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