

April 18, 1983

Dear Mr.

In Re:

I am a law professor and former director of studies at the INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, Strasbourg, France, who has served on the Human Rights Committee of the State Bar of California for the past three years. At the February 14 meeting, the Committee considered your bill relating to abortion, together with a number of related bills.

As author of a book in this field (copy enclosed), I made every effort to support the position of the unborn, but with no success whatever. I am writing you to express my thoroughgoing disenchantment with the presently constituted Human Rights Committee and to pledge you my personal support in any way that would be helpful.

Particularly appalling to me was the disinterest shown on the part of Committee members to investigate the factual side of the abortion issue; thus, no one was acquainted with a Boalt Hall professor John T. Noonan's classic essay, "the experience of pain by the unborn" (in Hilgers, Horen and Mall, eds., New Perspectives on Human Abortion [University Publications of America, 1981] --a work to which I also am a contributor). During my three years on the Committee some of the narrowest civil rights questions (e.g., Bar meetings in private clubs) have been analyzed and discussed ad nauseam; in marked contrast the abortion bills were dispensed with almost summarily. I can only conclude that the Committee, as presently constituted, is more interested in a doctrinaire allegiance to a stylized civil rights activism than to a commitment to such international human rights values as the right to life. One member of the Committee (an avowed homosexual) even went so far as to state that if he had his way, abortion would be permitted right up to the moment of natural birth.



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The author of the present paper is a member of the  
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The author is grateful to the members of the  
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Though the Committee on Human Rights has made significant contributions to minor civil rights issues during the three years I have been a member, I am forced to the conclusion that the Committee has so lost sight of the forest for the trees that I cannot any longer in good conscience serve on it. This letter therefore not only serves to apprise you of my willingness to assist in any responsible efforts to protect the lives of the unborn, but also to give public notice of my resignation, effective immediately, from the Committee on Human Rights of the California State Bar.

Yours faithfully,

John Warwick Montgomery

JWM:kt



