

Wilson calls pro-life plank rejection of reality by GOP

By E. Michael Myers
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

California Gov. Pete Wilson said yesterday he will strive to kill a party plank calling for a constitutional amendment banning abortions.

"My hope and my advice is we would be well disposed to agree to language that is a good deal more relevant to reality than that plank," Mr. Wilson said.

The Republican governor also said Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, the presumed GOP presidential nominee, should not appease his defeated rival Pat Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan has vowed to fight to retain the anti-abortion plank with all his political muscle and skill, raising the grim possibility for Mr. Dole of a divisive, prime-time party brawl at the national convention in San Diego.

Phyllis Schlafly, a leading opponent of abortion, said if the constitutional amendment is stripped from the party platform after years of its inclusion, it will cost Mr. Dole "millions of votes" in the fall campaign against President Clinton.

"It's a free country," Mr. Wilson said. "She's entitled to her opinion. I don't agree."

Mr. Wilson spoke at a news conference after a meeting with Mr. Dole to discuss strategy for the presidential campaign, especially capturing the top haul of California's 54 electoral votes. Mr. Dole was unavailable to comment on their strategy session and the chronic political problem of abortion for the GOP.

Mr. Buchanan was unavailable for comment, too.

After some confusion earlier this year about his position, Mr. Dole reasserted that he favors retaining the anti-abortion plank in the platform. However, it is clear the pragmatic, 36-year congressional veteran would prefer that the issue not hobble his candidacy. Mr. Dole already is trailing Mr. Clinton by double digits in most polls.

With only a handful of delegates, Mr. Buchanan has been eliminated as a candidate for the nomination. However, he wants his views on abortion, trade and other issues incorporated in the platform and has warned of political grief for Mr. Dole if his positions are ignored.

"I don't think that Bob Dole, as the nominee, needs to seek the blessing of a lesser candidate," said Mr. Wilson, a brief and highly ineffective candidate for the nomination himself.

"I think he needs to be, to the extent he can be consistent with his conscience, a leader of his party and someone who offers a big tent. I don't think Bob Dole — that his first concern should be the appeasement of anybody.

"If it is, I don't think it will be a winning strategy."

Because of the Supreme Court, Mr. Wilson said a woman's right to an abortion is the law of the land and it is folly to suggest a party platform plank will void it.

"I wouldn't support the amendment, but I also think it is unrealistic to tell people that, in fact, it is going to happen," Mr. Wilson said. "It isn't going to happen."

Instead, the governor said there should be language that shows the Republican Party favors social policies that encourage



"I don't think that Bob Dole, as the nominee, needs to seek the blessing of a lesser candidate."

—Gov. Pete Wilson

young women not to have abortions and which counsel couples to get an education and marry before having children.

"I think we ought to be urging the kind of responsible change that really should make this plank academic," he said. "It is pretty academic because it doesn't deal with the laws of the land and the reality of what is occurring.

"Whatever they may think, the law of the land, presently and for some time in the future, is going to be determined by that Supreme Court decision."

But Mrs. Schlafly said the political future for Mr. Dole is more immediately at hand. She said the votes of Mr. Buchanan's supporters will be lost if the pro-life plank is scrapped.

"The question is if he wants the votes of people who supported Pat Buchanan," Mrs. Schlafly said. "If he thinks he can win without them, he can conduct his campaign in that way."

As for Mr. Buchanan, she said if Mr. Dole wants his support, "he is going to have to ask for it."

AMERICA'S RED INK

Putting the national debt in perspective.

Thursday	\$5,092,767,860,565.51
Friday	\$5,096,090,106,286.62

Friday's increase (\$3,322,245,721.11) is enough money to purchase 733,387,576 pounds of Maxwell House coffee (\$4.53 a pound). That is about 2¾ pounds of coffee for every person in the United States.

The Washington Times