

O'Connor's conservative vote might decide abortion issue

By The Associated Press

The future of abortion in the United States, more than ever before, appears to hinge on the views of one woman — Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

And her latest word on the divisive issue is cheering anti-abortion forces while alarming abortion-rights advocates.

The court, ruling in cases from Ohio and Minnesota on Monday, upheld state laws making it significantly more difficult for girls to obtain legal abortions without first telling their parents.

Although the decisions did not directly affect the abortion rights of adult women, the court again indicated a willingness to reconsider its landmark 1973 decision in Roe vs. Wade that legalized abortion.

O'Connor cast the key vote as the court upheld, 5-4, a Minnesota law banning abortions for most unmarried girls under 18 unless both parents are notified or a judge's permission is obtained instead.

She also voted with the 6-3 majority to uphold an Ohio law that said minors must notify a parent before having an abortion.

O'Connor provided the critical vote in a 5-4 ruling that struck down a version of the Minnesota law that would have required two-parent notice without allowing the judicial bypass option.

She played the same role in July 1989 when the court, also by a 5-4 vote, gave states greater power to regulate abortions.

How far can states go in imposing new restrictions? "Precisely as far as Justice O'Connor will let them go," Roger Evans of Planned Parenthood said Monday.

Four high-court members — Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Byron R. White, Antonin Scalia and Anthony M. Kennedy — seem ready to reverse Roe vs. Wade. That would allow states to outlaw virtually all abortions.

Four justices — Harry A. Blackmun, William J. Brennan, Thurgood Marshall and John Paul Stevens — seem determined to defend women's right to abortion.

Left in the middle is O'Connor, who has criticized the 1973 ruling and until Monday had never voted to strike down a state regulation making abortions less accessible.

She soon may get another opportunity to reassess Roe vs. Wade. The U.S. territory of Guam recently passed a restrictive abortion law, and the

Louisiana Legislature is considering similar legislation.

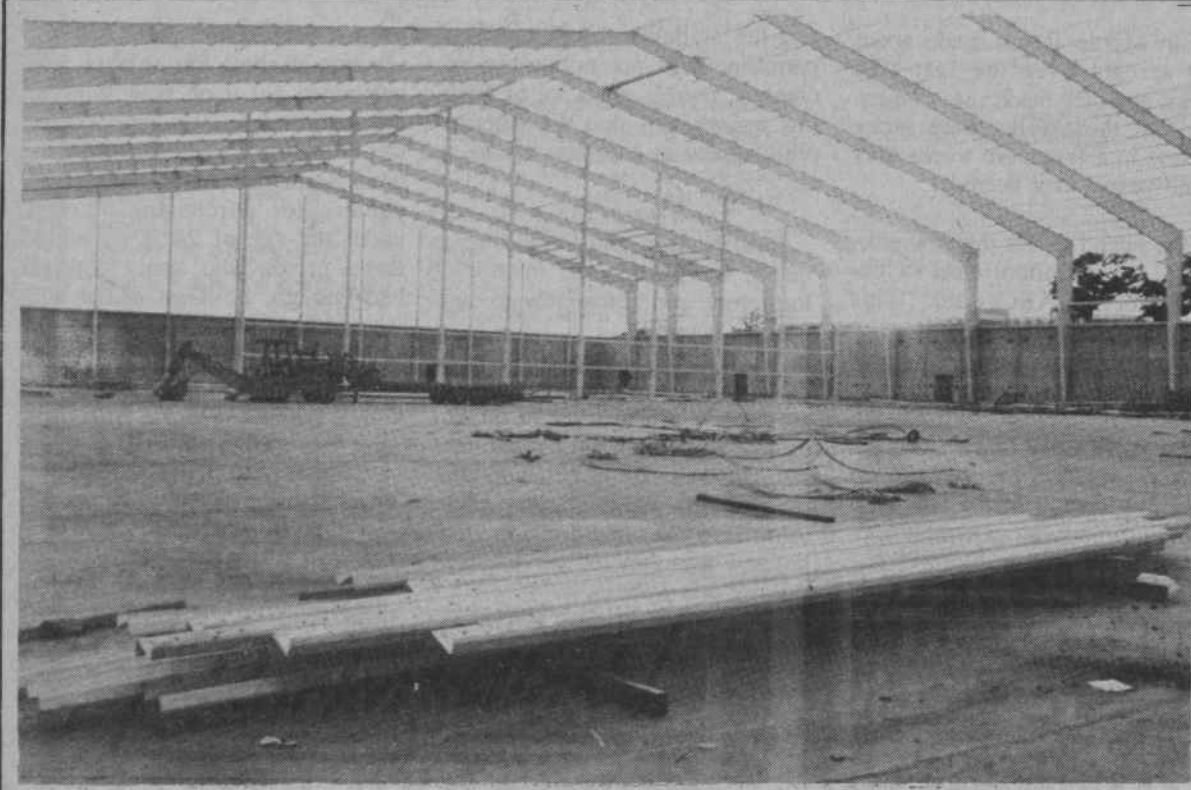
O'Connor's votes Monday, and the thrust of a concurring opinion she wrote in the Minnesota case, drew fire from abortion rights advocates but praise from abortion opponents.

"Women still have a right to abortion, but that right is becoming emptier and emptier," said Janet Benshoof of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Gary Bauer, president of the anti-abortion Family Research Council, said, "These two cases represent further evidence that Roe vs. Wade will sometime soon slip into the history books as an ill-fated Supreme Court decision."

O'Connor's pivotal role could change if the court's makeup changes before the next abortion test case arrives. In that event, President Bush's first appointment to the high court would carry enormous impact for the future of abortion.

Alluding to that fact, Kate Michelman of the National Abortion Rights Action League said, "The threat of overturning (the right to abortion) is as close as the next Supreme Court vacancy."



Nick Leoncavallo/The Gamecock

Rising to the occasion

The "New and Improved" Bubble nears completion. It is being built to replace the old one which was blown over by Hurricane Hugo.

Peace Corps members evacuated as rebels threaten Philippines

By The Associated Press

Peace Corps staffers have been pulled out of rural areas in the Philippines and brought to the capital following intelligence reports that Communist rebels planned to kill volunteers, officials announced Tuesday.

The move was the latest in a series of measures taken in the wake of threats against Americans by the Communist New People's Army. It has been fighting 21 years to establish a Marxist government in the Philippines.

Last week, the Philippine military said rebels in Manila plan to target Americans and other foreigners for assassination and kidnapping over the next six months.

U.S. Embassy spokesman Stanley Schrage said Ambassador Nicholas Platt ordered the recall of Peace Corps staffers last weekend but delayed the public announcement for security reasons.

He said no decision had been

made on when the 261 volunteers would be allowed to return to their posts, mostly in remote, rural areas where security is poor.

Schrage said the embassy had received a report that Peace Corps volunteers had been added to the target list of the New People's Army, which is believed to have killed eight Americans here since April 1989.

He refused to identify the source of the report but said the embassy took it seriously.

In Washington, Peace Corps director Paul Coverdell said he was taking the step as a "precautionary measure" and that all volunteers are safe.

Communist rebels claimed responsibility for killing two American airmen last month near the U.S.-run Clark Air Base. They threatened to kill more until all U.S. troops leave this country.

Last week, the U.S. Embassy warned Americans to take precau-

tions against terrorism in advance of the next round of U.S.-Philippine talks on the future American military bases here. Those talks are expected in August.

The lease on the bases expires in September 1991, and the rebels have demanded they be closed.

At the Admiral Hotel, where many Peace Corps volunteers were temporarily housed, several said they were ordered to Manila on short notice but were not briefed on the reason beyond the embassy's official statement.

"Most of the Filipinos in my area support Cory (President Corason Aquino), have nostalgic feelings for (the late President Ferdinand) Marcos and want nothing to do with the NPA," said one volunteer, who works on an agricultural project in Nueva Vizcaya province. He and the other volunteers declined to give their names.

S.C. beaches, recovered from Hugo, ready in time for summer's tourism

By The Associated Press

South Carolinas's beaches, battered nine months ago by the 135 mph winds of Hurricane Hugo, have been restored in time for the height of the summer tourist season.

"We can all be proud of the way we've rebounded so quickly," said Donna Gress of the South Carolina Coastal Council, which manages development along the state's 167-mile coast.

From Hilton Head to North Myrtle Beach, the state's beaches are again crowded with visitors in a season that appears to be build-

ing toward another record year for the tourism industry.

"Most of our beaches are back to pre-Hugo in terms of sand volume," Mrs. Gress said. But she added that the beaches are flatter than a year ago and it will take some time for sand to rebuild the dunes.

Following the hurricane, which smashed ashore Sept. 21 causing an estimated \$5.9 billion damage and killing 29, the state pushed up a berm along 60 miles of the coast to protect beaches from unusually high fall tides.

Later, the state and federal gov-

ernments joined in a \$9.3 million beach renourishment project to rebuild 12 miles of the hardest-hit beach along the Grand Strand — the northern end of the coast which is the heart of the state's tourism industry.

Later still came a \$1.35 million effort to replant dunes along 60 miles of the coast. Officials said the effort was the largest dune revegetation project in the nation's history.

The project, completed about three months ago, included 70 miles of sand fencing held in place by 55,000 fence posts. In some

areas, the fences, designed to trap sand, are expected to be covered by the end of the summer.

After the storm, there was also concern about debris from shattered houses which had washed into the shallow surf.

While sonar scans last winter indicated a number of such items, more recent scans of near shore waters show little evidence of such debris. Officials say most debris has been covered with sand and poses little threat to swimmers.

The state and local governments are still negotiating with the Federal Emergency Management

Agency which rejected an initial application to pay to remove such debris.

However, in Myrtle Beach, where swimming is prohibited around the remains of oceanfront piers because of debris, the city plans to remove the debris itself.

Meanwhile, tourism inquiries flooding into the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce are up 14 percent this year, an increase that generally translates into a similar increase in visitors, said chamber spokesman Doug Bell.

Tourism means about \$1.6 bil-

lion a year to the Grand Strand — the 60 miles of beaches stretching from North Carolina to Georgetown.

"We haven't heard any complaints about the conditions of the beaches after the renourishment. I think it really paid off," Bell said.

Statewide, tourism inquiries are up 10 percent and the state is looking for a 5 percent increase over last year's \$5 billion tourism spending, said Bob Liming, director of tourism for the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

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