

Move to declare Santa Cruz 'pro-choice city' spurs abortion debate

Abortion
By **ROGER SIDEMAN**
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SANTA CRUZ — Thirty-four years after the Supreme Court's decision to permit abortions, the City Council is affirming the landmark ruling again, this time by declaring Santa Cruz a "pro-choice city."

The council is poised to adopt a resolution at its meeting Tuesday.

The resolution — proposed by Mayor Emily Reilly and council members Mike Rotkin and Cynthia Mathews, who founded the local chapter of Planned Parenthood —

authorizes Santa Cruz to join the Pro-Choice City Campaign. The campaign is a national network of cities dedicated to advocating for reproductive health choices and access to services.

According to a staff report, "The city is proud to join other cities in affirming its position as a pro-choice city ... Santa Cruz embraces this initiative and offers its full support."

The Supreme Court made its landmark decision on Jan. 22, 1973.

Mathews said the anniversary is for the abortion-rights movement what Labor Day

'The city in their resolution is neglecting a huge portion of city residents.'

EDITH MANCHESTER,
ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVIST

is for organized workers or Martin Luther King Jr. Day is for the civil rights movement.

But events Saturday brought out people

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from both sides of the abortion debate.

About 20 anti-abortion activists held a protest Saturday morning. The group, calling themselves "Voice For Life," picketed in front of the Sutter Maternity Center. At least one person said the city's resolution is not fair to those local residents who disagree with its premise.

"We are the activist organization trying to get the message out to our society that abortion is wrong and we will do what we can to save the babies," said activist Edith

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Manchester, 87. "The city in their resolution is neglecting a huge portion of city residents."

Abortion advocates gathered together for a Saturday morning brunch at United Methodist Church, hosted by the Reproductive Rights Network of Santa Cruz County, a coalition of 50 local organizations.

The featured speaker was Kathy Kneer, a Sacramento lobbyist rep-

resenting Planned Parenthood affiliates across the state. She said that access to reproductive health services are not secure as anti-abortion advocates have led successful campaigns in states throughout the country to pass laws that regulate and limit access to abortion.

"The most significant erosion of Roe vs. Wade is coming in June when the Supreme Court rules on the so-called 'partial-birth' abortion ban," Kneer told a crowd of about 100 people. "It will only embolden red states to push for a full ban on abortion."

Mathews said the city's resolu-

tion is important given the history of support from local citizens and voters.

On Nov. 7, city residents overwhelmingly opposed Proposition 85, a state ballot measure which sought to require parental notification prior to a minor getting an abortion. About 72 percent of residents voted against a similar state measure a year earlier. Mathews represented the city at the largest abortion rights rally in history in Washington, D.C., in 2004.

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