

TO BE A FEMINIST MEANS TO BE PRO-LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Pease). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Ros-Lehtinen) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at one time or another we have all seen the bumper sticker which reads: ``Pro-Women = Pro-Choice,'' and it is presumed that feminists and defenders of equity and rights for women are defenders of abortion.

But in fact, what most feminists do not wish to acknowledge is that the early suffragists who are responsible for today's women's movement actually were staunchly pro-life.

Over a century ago, Susan B. Anthony tirelessly campaigned for suffrage for women's employment rights and for the abolition of slavery. She voted illegally, took part in the underground railroad, and yes, Susan B. Anthony, a mother of the feminist movement, opposed abortion.

In *The Revolution*, the radical women's paper which she published, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony strongly editorialized against abortion. She referred to the bloody act as child murder and infanticide, and addressed its root causes in women's oppression and in the abdication of family planning. She argued that laws pertaining to abortion victimized women while absolving men of all responsibility.

Susan B. Anthony was not alone in her thinking. Other early feminists also opposed abortion. For example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton proclaimed that ``If it is degrading to treat a woman as property, it is no better for a woman to treat her own child as property.'' Suffragist Margaret Sanger stated that abortion was a disowning of feminine values.

The first female presidential candidate, Victoria Woodhull, was likewise strongly against abortion. She stated that every woman knows that if she were free, she would never bear an unwished-for child nor think of murdering one before its birth.

Astonishingly enough, most feminists prefer to ignore that Alice Paul, the original author of the Equal Rights Amendment, the ERA, of 1923, said: ``Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women.'' Naturally, Paul opposed the later trend of linking abortion with the ERA movement.

Like the early suffragists who fought to give women's rights, a feminist should believe in the right to protect her own body, and in the likeness of Susan B. Anthony, the feminist, should stand up to defend the poor, oppressed, and rejected. She should fight for all human beings, whether they are black or white, born or unborn.

The phrase, ``It's a man's world'' is often used to describe today's society, a society which tends to view unplanned pregnancy and motherhood as an inconvenience. But many of today's feminists, rather than focusing on a woman's financial distress, the problems she may be facing at school, work, or at home, choose to give in to the pressures of a man's world.

Rather than fight for acceptance and protection for women facing unexpected pregnancies, many feminists suggest a dangerous, potentially fatal abortion as the remedy to all conditions. What would the suffragists have to say about giving in to this cruel society? Early feminist Susan Norton said, ``Perhaps there will come a time when an unmarried mother will not be despised because of her motherhood, when the right of the unborn to be born will not be denied or interfered with.''

As one of six pro-life women in Congress and a mother of two daughters, I believe that abortion is not a sign that women are free to choose. On the contrary, it is a sign that women incorrectly feel desperate and feel that they have no choice. Susan B. Anthony and the early defenders of the women's rights would agree that the slogan ``pro-choice'' is by no means to be equated with being pro-women. Perhaps if the early feminists were alive today, they would be fighting to amend those bumper stickers to instead read, ``Pro-Women = Pro-Life.''

I would like to thank the tireless pro-life advocate, Jane Abraham, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, for her inspiration. Jane has dedicated her time to enlighten persons on the feminist movement in America and to educate and train pro-life women for successful political careers.

Tonight I congratulate Jane and the many pro-life organizations and the countless volunteers who persevere in their hopes for finding a cure to our Nation's abortion rates.