



Staff Photo—Robert Connell

MOTHER AND CHILD ATTEND ABORTION HEARING TO REGISTER OPPOSITION
Mrs. Rosemarie Garcia-Carreras Brings Christine, 3 Months

Panel Tables Abortion Bill, Orders Study

By CHRISTENA BLEDSOE

A House committee has tabled a liberalized abortion proposal for Georgia after hearing heated debate in which a pregnant woman called it "murder" and a psychiatrist argued it would prevent emotional ills among unwanted children.

By a secret ballot vote of 6-2, the House Hygiene and Sanitation Committee late Tuesday tabled the measure but set up an interim study committee to consider it during the summer. Five members were absent when the vote came.

The move kills for this year any effort to further liberalize abortion laws unless the bill's sponsors, Reps. Kil Townsend and Grace Hamilton of Atlanta can get a majority of committee members to change their minds.

The abortion proposal would have set up an "abortion on demand" situation in which any pregnant woman, if not more than 12 weeks pregnant, could get an abortion if her doctor consented.

LAWs provide for abortion only if the mother's health is seriously endangered, if the fetus would likely have permanent damage or in rape cases. Abortions are allowed only if several doctors agree and only if a hospital review committee agrees.

In nearly three hours of debate, opponents took the traditional stand that abortion of any kind is murder, while proponents advanced a newer idea that abortion is a woman's right and should be between the woman and her doctor.

Mrs. Jane Larrowe, who is pregnant and seeking an abortion for health reasons, said she had seen at least 12 doctors and has been waiting for more than five weeks, under the present law, to learn if an operation would be approved for her.

Dr. James Waters, Emory University obstetric-gynecology professor, said that for the vast number of pregnant women who want to get an abortion the law is a "waste of time and money."

Abortion committees, he said, take a strict interpretation of the law which prevents most abortions, are afraid it will look bad if their hospital does too many, require "superproof of disease" and are more willing to grant an abortion if the woman will agree to be sterilized.

A U.S. Public Health Service physician, Dr. John Asher, said that one-fifth of all maternal mortality is due to crude, illegal abortions.

He also said that under Georgia's 1968 so-called liberal law, the state has performed about 10 times fewer abortions than under a similar law in Colorado and about 45 times less than in Maryland.

Townsend said he introduced the bill because the present one is "discriminatory" to women who do not have enough money to go out of the state or the country for a good abortion.

Dr. Malcolm Freeman, also of Emory, called the proposal a "bad bill" with several loopholes: it did not state penalties for criminal abortions, specify that the abortion must be done in a hospital, require reporting to the state, set Georgia residency requirements, require legal permission of the patient or husband or allow for rape cases specifically.