Both sides say Roemer's abortion ruling tough

By The Associated Press

People on both sides of the abortion issue agree that Gov. Buddy Roemer faced a difficult chore and was under a lot of outside pressure in deciding what to do about a hastily put together anti-abortion bill. They disagree, however, on his decision to veto the bill Friday.

"Gov. Roemer is once again at odds with his electorate, anti-abortion advocate Bertha Curley said.

"(Roemer) says he is against the killing, against abortion with exceptions, on one hand. On the other hand he justifies this veto which allows the killing to continue because of a flaw in the bill. He says it is not tough enough on the rape exceptions. Thousands of babies will be killed because he objects," said Mrs. Curley, president of the Friends of the Unborn in Alexandria.

"I wept when I heard that," she said. "I voted for this man. He will know the wisdom of this decision come October 1991."

Roma Allison, an abortion rights advocate and member of the state Coalition for Reproductive Freedom organization, said the governor's veto should end the abortion debate this year.

"Enough is enough," she said. "The Coalition will be urging the senators not to come back for an override attempt. We feel we have been through enough -- the voters and everybody." She said she thinks Roemer made the right decision.

"It was the only thing he could do," she said. "It was a very poorly written bill. Everyone knew that."

In vetoing the bill Friday, Roemer said it "does not meet even the minimum standards set forth by me long ago."

Roemer said the bill's exception for incest was inappropriate, but it treated rape victims "unevenly and unsatisfactorily."

"I am sure he was feeling pressure," Mrs. Curley said. "Pressure from the Democratic Party, pressure from the pro-choice groups."

The Rev. Leo Lytle, an anti-abortion activist and candidate for the Rapides Parish School Board, said he was not surprised by Roemer's veto.

"Gov. Roemer has repeatedly stated he is pro-life, but he rejected a very well prepared bill with no exceptions," Lytle said. "Then he was given what he asked for, a bill with exceptions for rape and incest."

"He's committed political suicide. He's vacillated from back when he was a congressman when he wanted no exceptions. There will be an outcry from our area as we try to put the pressure on. I believe (state Sen.) Woody Jenkins will call for a veto override session. This is going to give all of our area representatives and senators one last chance to see where they stand."

State law automatically sets a legislative session to consider overriding gubernatorial vetoes. Unless a majority of both houses votes not to have the override session, it is held 40 days after final adjournment of the legislative sesion.