Abortion vetoes supported

By MIKE HASTEN
State Editor

BATON ROUGE — While there’s not much that Gov. Buddy Roemer has done that he agrees with, former Gov. Edwin Edwards says he supports Roemer’s decision to veto two abortion bills approved by the Legislature during this year’s session.

Edwards, who told the Press Club of Baton Rouge that he is a candidate for governor in 1991, says Roemer’s decision to veto the abortion bills “is probably the only popular thing he’s done since he has been governor.”

Edwards said he would have vetoed the bills, had he been in Roemer’s position, but “I certainly wouldn’t have been as theatrical about it. You fellows (reporters) let him wring his hands in despair when he knew all along he was on a popular course.”

Edwards said he would have vetoed the first bill by Rep. Woody Jenkins, D-Baton Rouge, because “No. 1, it is not fair to require a woman who has been raped or impregnated as a result of incest to bear the fetus to term. No. 2, it is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court would not have blessed it with constitutionality. And three, it does not represent the majority thinking of the people of this state.”

Although he agrees with Roemer’s actions, “I would not have acted as though it was a horrible burden or a cross for me for me to bear and that I’m doing what was honorable and right despite how unpopular it is because he knew...”

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and I knew and everybody else knew that that was the proper thing for him to do.”

The second bill, which was assembled using a “beat up a flag burner hill” also should have been vetoed, Edwards said, despite the possibility of it being constitutional “from an issues standpoint” because it contained exceptions for rape and incest.

“But it was patently unconstitutional from a procedural standpoint,” Edwards said. “There is no way that the state supreme court would have blessed that as being acceptable legislation, given the mechanisms that were used to finally pass the bill.”

Edwards said he will not make abortion or Roemer’s veto of the bills an issue in his campaign.

“It is an issue” in all political races, he said. “It’s going to be an issue for a long period of time. It’s going to defeat some candidates and help others. It’s a no-win situation and no public official can come out ahead taking any kind of position.”

“But since we have to take a

Continued from page 1 position, the position I would take is I would sign a bill passed by the Legislature which prohibits abortion if it contains exceptions allowing the life of the mother to be protected over the fetus — at her option — and allowing her to obtain an abortion in the event she was impregnated as the result of rape or incest.”

Edwards said he believes his stand reflects the feelings of a majority of the people in the state.

The Daily Advertiser
Tuesday, August 21, 1990
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