Woman who witnessed abortion veto reveals identity

By DOUG MYERS
Capitol news bureau

A woman Gov. Buddy Roemer had at his side last year when he vetoed a bill to outlaw most abortions revealed her identity Monday, saying she had an abortion after doctors said a pregnancy would be damaging to her mental health.

Annette Fuselier of Covington said Monday she was a victim of incest as a child and that doctors told her that the effects of that experience would leave her traumatized and a "drooling" basket case if she had another child.

Roemer refused to reveal the identity of the 34-year-old Fuselier last year when he announced his veto of a bill to outlaw abortions except in cases of rape, incest and to save the life of the mother.

Witness

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Fuselier chose to come forward after the Louisiana House last week passed two strict anti-abortion bills — one by Jenkins with only the life of the mother exception and another by Rep. Sam Theriot, D-Abbeville, with rape, incest and life of the mother exceptions.

Fuselier said her situation would fall under exceptions for the "mental health of the mother and the life of the mother because of the premature labor complications (experienced during the birth of a previous child)."

"When I wrote Gov. Roemer last year, I told him, 'Abortion ends the promise of life. It told him rape and incest violate life, and I believe that until all lives are safe. . . . Painful choices have to be made, and abortion is one choice, and to take away that choice is criminal,' " she said.

Fuselier made the statements after speaking to a pro-choice forum at the state Capitol on Monday.

She refused to reveal what Roemer said to her in private last year.

"He (Roemer) was very respectful of my privacy," Fuselier said. "He did not give the press my name. He told me he had me there because he was struck by my courageouess."

Fuselier said she does not know if this indicates "what he is going to do this year."

"I know it was a clear indication of what he was going to do last year," Fuselier said. "I'm not going to put the governor in a trick bag, but I think last year it was a very clear indication of how he felt about last year's bill."

A Senate committee is scheduled to hear the two House-passed bills on May 29.

Louisiana currently has no substantive law prohibiting abortion or advertising abortion services.

Laws on the books for performing abortions and other penalties for advertising abortion services and abortion drugs have been found unconstitutional by the courts.

An emancipated, unmarried minor under 18 may not obtain an abortion without a notarized statement of consent from one of her parents. The minor may obtain an abortion without parental consent only by securing a court order.