



Pelosi to Receive Margaret Sanger Award — But Will It Matter?

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) will receive the Margaret Sanger Award from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America on March 27 at the abortion provider's annual gala event. Not much excitement there. It will do her little good, because those aligned with Planned Parenthood and disposed to regard its founder, the eugenics advocate Sanger, as a heroine are already in Pelosi's corner. And those opposed, including pro-life Republicans and leaders of the Catholic Church, may be counted on to maintain a mysterious sphinx-like silence on the matter.



We in New Hampshire have "been there, done that."

In the year 2000, former U.S. Senator Gordon Humphrey was the Republican candidate for governor of New Hampshire, looking to unseat two-term incumbent Jeanne Shaheen. It was a battle of the undefeated, as neither Humphrey nor Shaheen had ever lost either a primary or general election. Humphrey's problem was overcoming the perception that he was a political "yesterday," a relic of New Hampshire's solidly Republican past. Humphrey was elected to the Senate in 1978, upsetting veteran Democrat Tom McIntyre with the tagline, "I want to be the toughest skinflint in the U.S. Senate." He was reelected in the Republican landslide of 1984, then retired after two terms. In 2000 he was running statewide for the first time in 16 years. I recall remarking to him at the time that it must have been a challenge to reconnect with his old supporters.

"Yes," he said. "Especially the ones that are dead."

Shaheen, who had fashioned a "moderate" image for herself as a former state senator and two-term governor, managed to keep the focus off wedge issues like abortion, the death penalty, and gun control and on softer, "soccer mom" subjects like providing kindergarten statewide and advancing healthcare for children. Her challenge in 2000 was to portray Humphrey as not only yesterday, but as a dangerously radical yesterday. She had to convince New Hampshire voters that in the not very distant past we had twice elected to the U.S. Senate a flaming right-wing extremist. This, for Shaheen, was old hat. In Shaheen's Abridged Dictionary (SAD), "extremist" is defined as "a Republican running against Jeanne Shaheen." A "non-person," on the other hand is a Democrat running against Shaheen, whom she simply ignores and refuses to debate.

Shaheen ran ads playing up the fact that in a previous campaign year, Humphrey had gone to a congressional district in upstate New York to endorse the candidacy of Randall Terry, a frequently jailed anti-abortion activist and founder of Operation Rescue, a group famous for forming human blockades at abortion clinics. In the New Hampshire *Union Leader* column I was writing at the time, I pointed out that Shaheen had a few years earlier accepted the Margaret Sanger Award from Planned Parenthood, and I included a generous selection of quotes from Sanger to show her advocacy of birth



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 23, 2014

control to eliminate the “unfit” and undesirable and to create a human “race of thoroughbreds.” Her ideas included racial and ethnic stereotypes. Negroes were among the people to be weeded out, as were Catholics and others. And the coercive power of the state was not to be neglected. “In case of refusal such persons should have a choice of sterilization or isolation,” Sanger said. “Under no circumstances should the state allow such parents to cast their diseased and demented progeny upon society for the normal and fit to provide for.”

A grandson of Sanger wrote an op-ed response, published in the *Union Leader*, and I responded with another column. From there the discussion withered and died. To my knowledge, no Republican mentioned the Sanger/Shaheen connection, nor did any clergy, Catholic or otherwise. Inexplicably, the Humphrey campaign allowed the charges of extremism to run in one direction only, keeping the former senator’s campaign on the defensive. Shaheen, the “moderate” eugenicist, won; Humphrey, the pro-life conservative lost, and Republicans have been losing ground in New Hampshire and the nation ever since.

Unless pro-life, pro-family activist Karen Testerman or former U.S. Senator Bob Smith catches electoral lightning in a jar, either former state Sen. Jim Rubens or Scott Brown, the former U.S. senator from Massachusetts, will be facing Shaheen in this year’s U.S. Senate race in New Hampshire. Rubens and Brown are both defenders of “abortion rights.” Neither is likely to bring up Shaheen’s Margaret Sanger Award. The allegedly pro-life party will be too broadminded to take its own side in a fight. The culture of death will win again. And pro-life Republicans will be betrayed once again.

Photo of Sen. Nancy Pelosi: AP Images



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