

Robert Conrad

President Bush nominated Robert Conrad to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit on July 17, 2007.

Career

Currently a United States District Court Judge for the Western District of North Carolina.¹

- Bachelor of Arts, Clemson University, 1980
- Juris Doctorate, University of Virginia Law School, 1983
- Associate, Michie, Hamlett, Donato & Lowry, 1983-1986²
- Partner, Horn & Conrad, 1986-1987
- Attorney, Robert J. Conrad Jr., 1987-1988
- Partner, Bush, Thurman, & Conrad, PA, 1988
- Assistant United States Attorney, Western District of North Carolina, 1989-2001³
- Chief, Department of Justice Campaign Finance Task Force, 1999-2001
- United States Attorney, Western District of North Carolina, 2001-2004
- Partner, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw, LLP, 2004-2005
- Judge, U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina, 2005-2006
- Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina, 2006-present

Record on Choice-Related Issues

- From 1983-1986, Conrad served on the board of directors for the Charlottesville Pregnancy Center,⁴ an organization seemingly modeled as a so-called “crisis pregnancy center” (CPC). Many CPCs intentionally misinform and mislead women who are seeking pregnancy-related assistance by providing medically inaccurate information about pregnancy, contraception, or abortion. The Charlottesville Pregnancy Center operates within the larger network of the Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, an organization explicitly founded as “a Christian alternative to abortion.”⁵ Moreover, the following anti-choice propaganda appears on its website:
 - “Remember that abortion doesn’t erase a mistake – it only adds new ones.”⁶
 - “There is evidence that the risk of breast cancer may increase 140% following an abortion.”⁷

- “Many women experience strong negative emotions after abortion. Sometimes this occurs within days and sometimes it happens after many years. This psychological response is known as Post-Abortion Stress (PAS).”⁸
 - “Physical complications include heavy bleeding, infection, incomplete abortion, tearing of the cervix, scarring of the uterine lining, damage to internal organs and increased risk of miscarriage.”⁹

- Conrad has published articles and given speeches related to reproductive rights. These public statements raise significant concerns about his ability to apply the law fairly and impartially with respect to choice-related issues, including abortion, contraception, and sex education.
 - In 1988, Conrad wrote an op-ed piece for *The Charlotte Observer* in which he labeled Planned Parenthood a “radical, pro-abortion fringe group” that “promotes a radical abortion agenda.”¹⁰ When asked about this article during his 2005 confirmation hearing for a district court judgeship, Conrad claimed his comments were made only in the context of a “local county commission funding dispute.”¹¹ However, his position seems rooted in his general views of abortion and Planned Parenthood in particular. He further writes in the article:
 - “Planned Parenthood is the most radical legal advocate of unfettered abortion on demand.”¹²
 - “Only abortionists plying their trade, and blind ideologues such as Planned Parenthood, would consider limiting access to valuable information.”¹³
 - “Planned Parenthood knowingly kills unborn babies, not fetuses, as a method of ‘post-conception’ contraception, and to them that’s OK.”¹⁴

 - In 1991, Conrad published another op-ed in *The Charlotte Observer* responding to Magic Johnson’s “safe sex” message in light of his HIV-positive diagnosis.¹⁵ In the article, Conrad calls on adults to “preach” a message of “abstinence until marriage.”¹⁶ Then he goes so far as to compare sexually active teenagers to drunk drivers and drug dealers:
 - “Not all children and teens will heed [the abstinence message], of course, but then the existence of drunken drivers and drug dealers does not invalidate the enjoining of those destructive acts either. That rules are sometimes or even often violated does not mean there should be no rules at all.”¹⁷
 - Finally, Conrad sums up his beliefs on sex education with the following attack: “‘Safe sex’ is a myopically misconceived liberal ‘solution’ that fails to address the promiscuity underlying the AIDS disease and others.”¹⁸

- In 2005, Conrad published an article in the *Pepperdine Law Review* examining whether practicing law can be a “religious calling.”¹⁹ Answering affirmatively, Conrad cited an example “out of my law school days,” when a group of law students in Charlottesville, Virginia formed a CPC, “the purpose of which was to minister to the needs of pregnant women.... The pregnancy center still exists today.”²⁰ While he does not say whether he was one of those students, Conrad served on the board of directors for the Charlottesville Pregnancy Center from 1983-1986.

February 26, 2008

Notes:

¹ Federal Judicial Center, *Robert James Conrad Jr.*, Judges of the United States Courts, at <http://www.fjc.gov/servlet/tGetInfo?jid=3085> (last visited November 6, 2007).

² United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Robert James Conrad, Jr.*, Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees (Aug. 1, 2007).

³ The White House, *Robert J. Conrad, Jr.*, Judicial Nominations, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/judicialnominees/conrad.html> (last visited November 6, 2007).

⁴ United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Robert James Conrad, Jr.*, Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees (Aug. 1, 2007).

⁵ The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, *About the Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia*, at <http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/about-us.aspx> (last visited November 6, 2007).

⁶ The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, *At the Abortion Clinic*, at <http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/at-the-abortion-clinic.aspx> (last visited November 6, 2007).

⁷ The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, *Considering Abortion? Get the Facts First*, at <http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/option-abortion.aspx> (last visited November 6, 2007).

⁸ The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, *Frequently Asked Questions about Abortion and Pregnancy*, at <http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/abortion-faq.aspx#1> (last visited November 6, 2007).

⁹ The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, *Frequently Asked Questions about Abortion and Pregnancy*, at <http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/abortion-faq.aspx#1> (last visited November 6, 2007).

¹⁰ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Planned Parenthood: A Radical, Pro-Abortion Fringe Group*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, June 14, 1988.

¹¹ United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Responses of Robert James Conrad, Jr., Nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina to the Written Questions of Senator Dianne Feinstein*, (March 16, 2005) (on file with NARAL Pro-Choice America).

¹² Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Planned Parenthood: A Radical, Pro-Abortion Fringe Group*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, June 14, 1988.

¹³ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Planned Parenthood: A Radical, Pro-Abortion Fringe Group*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, June 14, 1988.

¹⁴ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Planned Parenthood: A Radical, Pro-Abortion Fringe Group*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, June 14, 1988.

¹⁵ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Virtues of Sports and Sex: Play by the Same Rules on Both Fields: Sacrifice, Commitment and Self-Control*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Nov. 14, 1991.

¹⁶ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Virtues of Sports and Sex: Play by the Same Rules on Both Fields: Sacrifice, Commitment and Self-Control*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Nov. 14, 1991.

¹⁷ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Virtues of Sports and Sex: Play by the Same Rules on Both Fields: Sacrifice, Commitment and Self-Control*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Nov. 14, 1991.

¹⁸ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Virtues of Sports and Sex: Play by the Same Rules on Both Fields: Sacrifice, Commitment and Self-Control*, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Nov. 14, 1991.

¹⁹ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Can Ordinary Practice of Law Be a Religious Vocation?: A Panelist's Response*, 32 PEPP. L. REV. 551 (2005).

²⁰ Robert J. Conrad, Jr., *Can Ordinary Practice of Law Be a Religious Vocation?: A Panelist's Response*, 32 PEPP. L. REV. 551 (2005).