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# GOP conservatives take aim at justices in abortion battle

By JOHN HOWARD  
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**ANAHEIM** — Republican conservatives on Saturday denounced state Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald George's role in overturning California's law requiring parental consent for teen-age abortions.

At the same time, they feared whether a full-blown public debate on abortion could cripple GOP gubernatorial contender Dan Lungren's election chances.

The meeting of about 100 Republicans included a non-binding advisory vote on what role the California Republican Party should take in response to the court's ruling. That ruling struck down an unenforced 1987 law requiring teen-agers to get at least one parent's permission — or the approval of a judge — to obtain an abortion.

The results of the vote were expected to be announced later in the week.

The 4-3 decision by the seven-member court, authored by George, has become a flash point for the court's critics, who believe it trampled on constitutional rights and the rights of parents to decide how to raise their children.

Lungren, who voted for George's confirmation when Gov. Pete Wilson appointed him to the bench, strongly opposes abortion.

Since polls show that most voters favor abortion rights, some activists worried whether Lungren could be hurt politically by a Republican attack on high court justices and other members of the judiciary, most of whom were appointed by Republican governors.

The polls, however, also show that the public believes teen-agers seeking abortions should get an adult's permission.

"If we start opening up the floodgates, the Democrats are going to start going after our people," said San Francisco attorney Lawrence Callaghan. "I would be in favor of retaining the justices," he added — a comment that drew scant support at the meeting in a ballroom at the Anaheim Marriott.

But one Republican activist said the issue could work to Lungren's

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benefit, positioning him as person of principle who favors parental rights.

"It potentially is a wonderful way for Dan Lungren to distinguish himself from (Democrat) Gray Davis," said Chuck DeVore, an elected member of the Orange County Republican Central Committee.

"If our base is divided over any issue that's on the ballot, I'm greatly concerned that the liberals will take advantage of it," he said.

The comments arose during discussion led by Sen. Ray Haynes, a conservative Republican and the chairman of the Republican Party's newly formed Judicial Evaluations Committee.

The committee's membership was uncertain until shortly before Saturday's gathering, when Haynes announced that party Chairman Michael Schroeder had selected the members. They included prosecutors, a gubernatorial adviser and a retired state Supreme Court justice.

Four justices are up for voter confirmation for 12-year terms: George and Justices Ming Chin, Janice Rogers Brown and Stanley Mosk.

The Republican Party's treasurer, political veteran Shawn Steel, urged Republicans to stay focused on the November goal — the election of a GOP governor to protect the Republicans against the Democrat-ruled Legislature on the once-a-decade reapportionment.

"The party's principal goal is the election of Dan Lungren ... (it) will determine in large measure how the district lines are drawn at all levels," Steel said.