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AP Laserphoto

Members of the National March for Women's Lives walk down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., toward the Capitol yesterday.

Sacrificing Sunday sleep for their cause

By MEG NUGENT
and IVETTE MENDEZ

Staff writers

If you cherish sleep and a day off, scrambling out of bed on a Sunday to catch a 6 a.m. bus to the nation's capital requires strong motivation.

For 32 residents of Passaic and Bergen counties, a chance to "March for Women's Lives" yesterday in Washington, D.C., was worth

the loss of sack time.

*'We're talking
about a right
people already
have'
— Rita O'Connor*

Billed as the largest demonstration of support for birth control and legal abortion in U.S. history, the four-hour walk from the National Mall to the Capitol boasted as many as 120,000 participants.

And many of the Passaic-Bergen contingents were more than willing to discuss why as they prepared to leave from Wayne's Willowbrook

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March for a choice

Rally supports abortion rights

By IVETTE MENDEZ

Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Tens of thousands of women from across the country converged on the capital yesterday for an abortion-rights march, protesting Reagan administration policies they say undercut women's rights.

To chants of "Not the church, not the state; women must decide their fate," the demonstrators marched almost 3 miles through the streets in a route that took them past the White House before a rally on the steps of the Capitol.

The marchers, who included groups representing feminists, gays, and labor activists as well as more than 100 student delegations, held placards, banners, and other visible expressions of their view.

These ranged from the longtime symbol for peace to coat hangers painted red. Hangers were long used to perform back-alley abortions.

One large black banner, held by women dressed in white to symbolize the feminist movement back to the suffragettes, stated: "In memory of all women who have died from illegal abortion."

"Oooh, no ambiguity in that statement," remarked a man to his female companion as they passed the banner.

A smattering of pro-life supporters who oppose abortion stood briefly in the mall area before the march began. The members

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Local NOW members 'marching for lives'

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Mall on the long bus trip to the rally.

"We're talking about a right that people already have," said Rita O'Connor, membership coordinator of the Passaic County chapter of the National Organization for Women.

"We're not talking about fighting to get a right — it's that other people are fighting to take away

that right," she added, referring to pro-life groups lobbying to make abortion and birth control illegal.

"I think it's paramount because it really is what it says — a march for women's lives," said county NOW member Linda Mauro as she passed out bagels and song sheets to bus passengers.

While Mauro worked the back of the bus as self-designated host, NOW colleague Gayle Duran work-

ed the front with a supply of orange juice, cups, and pecan cookies.

"Since '69 I've been doing this. I'm a veteran of many movements," the 35-year-old Duran said in response to comments about her food supply from a passenger who came unprepared.

"I'm here to keep a right to choose," Duran said of her reasons for the trip., "And I'd like to see a

nice turnout at the demonstration so that everyone can see that the majority still has the right to choose."

"That's right," said Clifton resident Karen Spindel. "And when you're stripped of one right, you could be stripped of another."

"We need a big turnout because it's important that people see we are the majority."