



Pro-Life Activities

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARDINAL WELCOMES SUPREME COURT DECISION UPHOLDING FEDERAL PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN

WASHINGTON, DC—Cardinal Justin Rigali welcomed the Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision upholding the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 in *Gonzales v. Carhart*.

Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, is Chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The full text of his statement follows:

“Today, after a decade of struggle in legislatures and courts, the U.S. Supreme Court finally upheld a federal law prohibiting the brutal and inhumane partial-birth abortion procedure. This is the first time in 34 years that the Court has upheld a ban of any type of abortion.

“The Court’s decision does not affect the legal status of the great majority of abortions, and does not reverse past decisions claiming to find a right to abortion in the Constitution. However, it provides reasons for renewed hope and renewed effort on the part of pro-life Americans. The Court is taking a clearer and more unobstructed look at the tragic reality of abortion, and speaking about that reality more candidly, than it has in many years.

“Especially welcome is the Court’s explicit recognition of certain key facts: that abortion is the taking of a human life, and that government has a legitimate interest in protecting and preserving this life at every stage; that 'respect for human life finds an ultimate expression in the bond of love the mother has for her child'; that abortion may also cause grief and sorrow for women, which is only made worse when the reality of the procedure has been withheld from them until it is too late; and that the ethical integrity of the medical profession, as well as the fabric of our society, is threatened by the acceptance of practices that are difficult to distinguish from infanticide.

“The Court also acknowledges that in some past decisions, the usual rules for constitutional review were distorted by an unwarranted hostility to legislative efforts to respect unborn human life. We hope today’s decision marks the beginning of a new dialogue on abortion, in which fair-minded consideration will be given to the genuine interests of unborn children and their mothers, to the need for an ethically sound medical profession, and to society’s desperate need for a foundation of respect for all human life.”

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NEWS

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NYS Catholic Conference statement on U.S. Supreme Court partial birth abortion decision

The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, today upheld the national Partial Birth Abortion Ban. Kathleen M. Gallagher, director of pro-life activities for the New York State Catholic Conference, made the following statement in reaction:

“Today's Court action is a victory for common sense and a victory for unborn children and their mothers. We believe it will restore some sanity and balance to our legal system by placing reasonable restrictions on the out-of-control abortion industry. The consensus of the majority of state legislatures and the federal government was that this abortion method should be banned. We are hopeful that this decision means that the Court has moved past the constitutional overreach of *Roe v. Wade* and will begin to allow additional regulations and restrictions in this area. After all, regardless of the stage of development or the type of abortion procedure used, the humanity of all unborn children is the same, and we believe they all should be protected in law.

“The medical community has testified that the horrific partial birth abortion procedure is never necessary to save a woman's life. The late pro-abortion Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan labeled it rightly as “infanticide.” No one with an open mind could hear the testimony of the doctors who specialize in this procedure and conclude that partial birth abortion is protected by the United States Constitution.

“The Bishops of New York State and Catholic and non-Catholic pro-life New Yorkers alike applaud this decision. We are grateful to President Bush for promoting the law that was upheld today, and for the members of Congress who passed it. Finally, we are grateful to the five-member majority of Supreme Court who saw partial-birth abortion for what it is – child abuse – and let sanity prevail.”

The Catholic Conference represents New York State's Bishops in matters of public policy.

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