



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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