



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 22, 2014

## Pro-Lifers in 41st March for Life Brave Harsh Conditions

Braving temperatures with wind chills in the single digits, dedicated pro-lifers from all over the United States gathered in our nation's capital on January 22 to participate in the 41st annual March for Life.

The day actually consists of a series of events participated in by tens of thousands of people dedicated to defending the right to life, including a Tuesday afternoon youth rally in the Hyatt Regency hotel, a Wednesday morning youth rally and Mass for Life held simultaneously at the 28,000-seat Verizon Center and 10,000-seat D.C. Armory, the March for Life Rally straddling the noon hour, and then the March itself, which follows its route up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court Building on Capitol Hill.



Another event scheduled for Tuesday, the Nellie Gray 5K race, named for the march's founder, was cancelled due to the snow and bitter cold.

While exact attendance figures for this year's event are not available as we write, the 2013 March for Life drew an estimated 650,000 people. The first March for Life in 1974, formed in response to the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision made on January 22, 1973, drew 20,000 marchers. In *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional all state laws prohibiting abortion. [National Right to Life](#) estimates that there have been more than 56 million abortions in the United States since the decision was given.

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A tweet from the March for Life said: "We march because 56 million Americans never had a chance to experience snow."

Pope Francis also sent a tweet to the marchers: "I join the March for Life in Washington with my prayers. May God help us respect all life, especially the most vulnerable."

[USA Today](#) quoted Veronika Johannsen, 22, of College Station, Texas, who managed to travel to Washington, despite the bad winter weather en route, to attend her second March for Life.

"The face is changing. It's not just white male politicians like the pro-choice people like to say," said Johannsen. "All kinds of people come. Religious groups of all different denominations, former abortion workers, women who have been raped or have been conceived in rape."

A theme repeated over and over again during this year's events was that adoption is the pro-life alternative to abortion, for those women who find themselves in an unplanned pregnancy and feel unable to raise a child themselves.



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“We want to encourage women facing the option of abortion to choose adoption,” said Jeanne Monahan, president of the March for Life Education & Defense Fund — the parent organization of the march. “Adoption is at the center of motherhood. Motherhood is all about sacrifices. This is an ultimate sacrifice for the good of the baby.”

Monahan, who previously worked for the Family Research Council, [assumed the leadership of March for Life](#) following the death of the march’s founder, Nellie Gray, in 2012.

The speakers who addressed the rally, bundled up against the bitter cold temperatures, addressed a crowd that was warm in its fervent dedication to the cause for life.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.), who postponed his flight to Israel to address the March, thanked those present for “braving these unbelievably cold temperatures” and “giving voice to our cause of protecting life.”

Cantor stated that the “inalienable right to life extends to the unborn” and, “I believe that one day in the not too distant future our movement will be victorious because we will prevail in securing a culture of life.”

He continued, “We will continue to fight for the unborn because it is the right and moral thing to do.”

Cantor also used his time to urge support of the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, sponsored by his colleague (and the next rally speaker) Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.).

The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act (H.R. 7) has 164 cosponsors. It states, in part: “No funds authorized or appropriated by Federal law, and none of the funds in any trust fund to which funds are authorized or appropriated by Federal law, shall be expended for any abortion.” It has a related bill in the Senate, No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, S. 946.

Cantor also announced that the bill will be voted on next week, when the House of Representatives “will vote once and for all to end taxpayer funding for abortions.”

Rep. Smith spoke next and encouraged the attendees by telling them that the pro-life movement is very much alive, offering the 200 pro-life laws enacted by the states over the past year as proof that the movement was gaining ground.

Smith took President Obama to task for promising that no federal dollars would be used to fund abortion, yet by providing tax incentives for abortion providers the federal government was doing just that. Smith also likened this failed promise to Obama’s promise that, under ObamaCare, people could keep their old insurance plan, if they preferred it.

Another member of Congress addressing the rally was Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.) who said, “We are here today to remember the millions of lives devastated with abortion and to pledge ourselves anew to upholding the most fundamental” right, “the right to life.”

Hartzler observed, “There are more babies who perish each year through abortion than people who live in an entire congressional district.”

The congresswoman continued the adoption theme by stating that she and her husband are adoptive parents.

Other impressive speakers who addressed the rally included Molly Anne Dutton, who was the 100th “Miss Homecoming” at Auburn University. Dutton told the heartwarming story of her mother, who had become pregnant as a result of sexual assault, but had her baby (Molly) and placed her for adoption.



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Another speaker was Nicole Peck of the Silent No More Campaign, an organization comprised of women who have had abortions, but deeply regret doing so. She told of her 10-year struggle with guilt following her abortion, after which she found new hope and healing in Jesus. Peck eventually married and when she and her husband found they could have no children together they adopted two babies.

Closing up the rally was a highly respected evangelical leader, James Dobson, who founded Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council and more recently launched a radio broadcast, "Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson."

Alluding to the frigid conditions, Dobson began, "Your faces are cold but your hearts are on fire, right?"

Dobson recalled that he was driving on a freeway in Los Angeles on January 22, 1973 when he heard that the Supreme Court had legalized abortion with the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

He said, "I grieved over it because I knew it meant millions of babies would die.... Who would've known it would be 56 million by this point 41 years later?"

He recalled how he had counseled a young Christian couple who came to him for advice after their doctors advised an abortion because they thought the wife's pregnancy was not viable.

He told the couple, "If it were Shirley [his wife] and me we would say, 'Give life to that baby!'"

The baby girl was born and was perfectly healthy. She is now 38 years old, married to a pastor, and the couple is engaged in a very important ministry in an inner city where they are making a major difference in peoples' lives.

He told the listeners, "I say to you, if you're facing a similar situation ... let your baby live!"

Dr. Dobson also delivered the rally's closing prayer.

While *Roe v. Wade* is generally recognized as the decision that "legalized abortion," the decision also represented an increase in federal power over the states. Justice Byron R. White wrote in his dissenting opinion: "The Court simply fashions and announces a new constitutional right for pregnant women and, with scarcely any reason or authority for its action, invests that right with sufficient substance to override most existing state abortion statutes."

Because the right to life is such an important and urgent matter, the states' rights aspect of *Roe* is generally overlooked, but it is an important principle in itself.

This year's March for Life seemed more energized than those held in previous years, even with the harsh winter conditions. Its new leadership under Jeanne Monahan has made a strong effort to reach out to more young people and has also made great strides in uniting pro-life people from across a wide spectrum of religious affiliations — all joined in their commitment to life.

*Photo of pro-life demonstrators marching in Washington, D.C. January 22: AP Images*



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