

The speeches before the annual March for Life in the nation's capital are rousing, pointed, and poignant. This year's speeches were also surprisingly personal.

Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-TX, credited his experience with his own baby for his pro-life views. He said, "Having allowed my child, prematurely born by 10 weeks, to hold onto my finger for eight hours non-stop I came to know, they want to live! They want to live!"

Michigan Congressman Tim Walberg spoke alongside his wife, Susan. "We have four grandkids: one in Heaven, two on the ground, and one in the womb. Who says you can't be a grandparent of one who is pre-birth but who is alive?" he said.

A former pastor who worked at Moody Bible Institute, Walberg called the pro-life movement "a force of redemption...Redeeming those who have been consigned to death without their choice. Redeeming the young ladies who have been sold a bill of goods, that is a lie."

Others said they came to oppose abortion through meeting children who ran a high risk of being aborted. Tim Huelskamp, R-Kansas, said, "I'm here today with my wife, Angela, and three of our four adopted children. Isn't adoption great?"

Rep. Phil Roe used his background delivering children to explain why he opposes their deaths in the womb. "For the last 31 years, I'm a pro-life ob/gyn doc that has delivered almost 5,000 children," the Tennessee congressman said. "The group that I'm in has delivered almost most than 25,000 children during that time...I cannot imagine this word without those great people." He noted with pride that he later recommended a baby he delivered for the Air Force Academy. He vowed, "You have my solemn promise, with the last breath in my body, I will fight for life in this great nation."

Although the March for Life shines the spotlight on the evils of abortion, it celebrates life at all its stages and opposes the taking of innocent life in all forms. Bobby Schindler of the Terri Schiavo Life and Hope Network said politicians who claim to be pro-life have the responsibility "to protect all innocent life, including those persons like my sister, Terri Schiavo."

"We must understand the reality that the deliberate killing of our brain-injured is also happening in countless health care facilities across the country every single day," he said. "If we don't defend the value and dignity of our disabled, elderly, and medically vulnerable brothers and sisters, we will never defeat this insidious culture of death."

Schindler was introduced by Br. Paul O'Donnell of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, who said the pro-life movement must "proclaim that we will not let ObamaCare kill the pre-born child, or the elderly or the disabled. Remember that euthanasia follows abortion, just as night will follow this day."

Missouri's Vicky Hartzler showed pride in being one member of a "group of pro-life women in Congress."

Other speakers underlined how the right to life safeguards all other constitutional liberties.

Congressman Allen West, R-FL, who was greeted with perhaps the most enthusiastic round of applause of all the day's speakers, said, "There is no cause more important for preserving [American] freedom than reaffirming the transcendent right to life of all human beings, a right without which no other rights have any meaning."

"This fight does not end until we protect our unborn," he said.

"Our founding fathers had it right when they said our Creator had endowed us with certain unalienable rights," said Ohio Republican Bill Johnson, "and it was no accident that life was the first one of those rights that they mentioned." He promised "to continue to fight Washington to prevent your tax dollars from funding abortion."

Several of the speakers, including March for Life founder Nellie Gray, said the marchers' resilience was a testament to their dedication.

Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky planned to address the gathering but was detained in a high-visibility run-in with the TSA.

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