

Speeches

Governor Romney's Remarks At The Massachusetts Citizens For Life Mother's Day Pioneer Valley Dinner

Thursday, May 10, 2007

"It's a honor to be with you and be with people who exemplify the pro-life values throughout their lives.

"I believe it's an honor to receive this award, as you can imagine.

"I recognize that it is awarded for where I am on the issue of life, not for where I've been.

"And I respect the fact that you arrived at this place of principle a long, long time ago.

"And I appreciate the fact that you're inclined to honor someone who arrived here only a few years ago.

"I'm evidence that your work, that your relentless campaign to promote the sanctity of human life, bears fruit.

"And I do follow, as Kevin indicated, a long line of converts - George Herbert Walker Bush, Henry Hyde, Ronald Reagan. Each of them made meaningful contributions to this cause.

"It is instructive to see the double standard at work here. When a pro-life figure changes to pro-choice, it hardly gets a mention. But when someone becomes pro-life, the pundits go into high dudgeon.

"And so, I'm humbled and grateful to be welcomed this evening so warmly and so openly.

"I think a lot of you know that you were always welcome in my office when I was Governor.

"Together we worked arm-in-arm on a number of issues. And I can promise you this - if I'm lucky enough to win a couple of elections ahead of me, that will also be the case when I'm President.

"I'm often asked when I go traveling around the country, how I, as a conservative Republican, could possibly have been elected in Massachusetts. And I tell them there were three things that helped account for a relatively improbable victory. Let me just reverse these for a moment.

"One, of course, was the state was in a fiscal crisis. A meltdown, of sorts. Beacon Hill couldn't get budgets done on time. Another big tax hike looked like it was on the way. And I promised that I would balance the budget without raising taxes. And, as you know, together with the legislature, that's what we did. We eliminated a \$3 billion shortfall. And by the time I left, our surpluses had replenished the rainy-day fund to over \$2 billion.

"Second, we were in a jobs crisis. We were losing jobs every month in Massachusetts. People were afraid. I went to work to bring jobs back to our state. From the end of the recession, we added some 60,000 new jobs to Massachusetts. And we finally got our economic development act together. It's in large measure responsible for a lot of the economic growth that we continue to experience even to this day.

"And third, I think that values also played a role in my campaign success. My opponent said that she would sign a bill in favor of gay marriage. I said that I oppose gay marriage and civil unions. My opponent favored bilingual education in school, remember? I did not. I said that to be successful in America, kids needed to learn the language of America. And as you will surely recall, my opponent wanted to lower the age of consent for an abortion from 18 to 16 - and I said no way.

"And so, social conservatives, many of them Democrats and Independents, joined fiscal conservatives to elect a Republican.

"Now, that being said, I had no inkling that I was going to find myself in the center of the battlefield on virtually every social issue of our time after becoming Governor.

"The first battle came, as you recall, when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, decided by a one vote majority, they found a right to same-sex marriage in our constitution. Now, I'm sure that John Adams, who wrote our constitution, would be surprised.

"The Court said that traditional marriage as we have known it, and I quote here, 'is rooted in persistent prejudices,' that's marriage, it's rooted in persistent prejudices, and 'works a deep and scarring hardship ... for no rational reason.'

""For no rational reason' they said. How about children? Isn't marriage about the development and nurturing of children? And isn't a child's development enhanced by access to both genders, by having both a mom and a dad.

"I believe that the Court erred because it focused on adults and adult rights.

"They should have focused on the rights of children. The ideal setting for raising a child is in a home with a loving mom and a loving dad.

"I can tell by your applause that many of you joined the effort to stop, or block or to slow down this very unprecedented Court decision. We took every step we could think of, within the law.

"First, we pushed for a stay - that was denied.

"Then, we fought for an amendment limiting marriage to a relationship between a man and a woman - that lost in the legislature by only two votes.

"We upheld the 1913 law that prohibited out of state couples from coming to Massachusetts and getting married here. That prevented us from becoming the Las Vegas of gay marriage.

"And in the final analysis, as you know, we went to work to secure a vote of the citizens, and that's a battle that took us all the way to Court, we got a win there. And now we're just one step away from putting it back on the ballot. And I'm sure this Representative and this Senator will get the job done.

"Of course, the issue now is whether a single vote majority of our Supreme Judicial Court will be allowed to trump the voice of the people in a democracy. If it is, then John Adams would truly be astonished.

"By the way, we learned that the phrase 'slippery slope' describes a very real phenomenon because the implications of the marriage decision quickly went well beyond adult rights and adult marriage. Efforts were made to change the birth certificate by removing 'mother' and 'father' and replacing them with 'parent A' and 'parent B.' I said no to that. And parents of a child in the 2nd grade were told that their son had to listen to a book called the 'King and the King,' about a prince who marries a prince. The school's rationale was since gay marriage was legal in Massachusetts, there's nothing wrong with such a policy.

"And then one more slide along the slippery slope. The Catholic Church was forced to end its adoption service, which was crucial in helping the state find some homes for some of our most difficult to place children. Why? Because the Church favors placements in homes with a mother and a father. And now, even religious freedom was being trumped by the new-found right of gay marriage. So you know why I immediately drafted and introduced legislation to grant religious liberty protection, but the legislature hasn't taken it up yet.

"Now, I've taken this message to Washington, explaining the far-reaching implications of the gay marriage decision and the need to support a federal amendment to protect marriage. I testified before Congress. I wrote to every U.S. Senator. You can write to them too, but they don't always listen. Unfortunately, several senators even from my own party voted against the

marriage amendment.

"But that fight is not over. We're going to combine together, lock arms to win it.

"Now, in the midst of that battle, another one came up. And it involved cloning and embryo farming for the purposes of stem cell research. And as Kevin said, I studied the subject in quite a bit of depth. I have high hopes for stem cell research. But for me, a bright moral line is crossed when we create new life for the sole purpose of experimentation and ultimate destruction.

"That's why I fought to keep cloning and embryo farming illegal in Massachusetts.

"It was during this battle on cloning and embryo farming that I began to focus a good deal more attention of my own views with regards to abortion.

"As you know, when I first ran for office, I considered whether this should be a personal decision or whether it should be a societal or governmental decision. I concluded, wrongly, that I would support the law as it was in place - effectively, a pro-choice position.

"And I was wrong.

"The *Roe v. Wade* mentality has so cheapened the value of human life that rational people saw human life as mere research material to be used, and then destroyed. The slippery slope could soon lead to racks and racks of living human embryos, Brave New World-like, awaiting termination.

"What some see as a mere clump of cells is actually a human life. Human life has identity. Human life has the capacity to love and to be loved. Human life has profound dignity, dignity undiminished by age or infirmity.

"And so I publicly acknowledged my error, and joined with you to promote the sanctity of human life.

"And you know that my words were matched with my actions. As you know, every time I faced a decision as the Governor that related to human life, I came down on the side of the sanctity of life.

"I fought to ban cloning.

"I fought to ban embryo farming.

"I fought to define life as beginning at conception rather than at implantation.

"I fought for abstinence education in our schools.

"I vetoed a so-called emergency contraception bill that gave young girls drugs without prescription, drugs that could be abortive and not just contraceptive.

"That's my record as your Governor.

"It was fought against long odds. You know that, you go up against those odds every day. I always appreciated the strong support I received from you, the members of the pro-life community, for your actions.

"Now of course you recognize not everyone agrees with me or with you. You can't be a pro-life Governor in a very pro-choice state without considering that there are heartfelt and thoughtful arguments on both sides of the question. And I certainly believe in treating all people with respect and tolerance. It's our job to persuade our fellow citizens of our position.

"The problem is that there are some people who believe that their views must be imposed on everyone. More and more, the vehicle for this imposition is the courts. Slowly but surely, the courts have taken it upon themselves to be the final arbiters of our lives. They forget that the most fundamental right in a democracy is the right to participate in your own governance.

"Make no mistake: abortion and same-sex marriage are not rights to be discovered in the Constitution.

"I think Chief Justice John Roberts put it best at his confirmation hearing. He described the role of a judge. He said, 'Judges and Justices are servants of the law, not the other way around. Judges are like umpires,' he said. 'Umpires don't make the rules, they apply the rules...and I will remember that it's my job,' he said, 'to call balls and strikes and not to pitch or bat.'

"That's my kind of judge and that's the kind I'd appoint.

"On the tenth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Ronald Reagan observed that the Court's decision had not yet settled the abortion debate. It had become as he said, 'a continuing prod to the conscience of a nation.'

"And now, more than thirty years later, that is still the case. Honored court decisions haven't settled this question, but have further divided the nation. And *Roe v. Wade* continues to work its destructive logic throughout our society.

"This can't continue.

"At the heart of American democracy is the principle that the most fundamental decisions should ultimately be decided by the people themselves.

"We're a decent people who have a commitment to the worth and dignity of every person, ingrained in our hearts and etched in our national purpose.

"So these are the challenges that face the next President: strengthening our country and our families, protecting marriage and human life and preserving for our children the true blessings of liberty.

"These are noble purposes, worthy of a great people.

"Thank you so very much. It's an honor to be with you. "

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