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Telephone Remarks to the March for Life

January 22, 2004

The President. Well, thank you very much, Nellie. I appreciate your kind introduction, and thank you for including me in this celebration of life. I'm calling you today from Roswell, New Mexico. And it sounds like you've got some people who know where Roswell is here in the audience.

I know that good folks have gathered there on The Mall from every corner of America to take part in the 31st March for Life. And I want you to pass on my best to each one of them in person, please, and tell them how much I appreciate their devotion to such a noble cause.

You believe, as I do, that every person, however frail or vulnerable, is a blessing. Each of us has a special dignity, a place and purpose in this world. And in the Declaration of Independence, our Founders stated this self-evident truth: The right to life does not come from government; it comes from the Creator of life.

During the past 3 years, we've made real progress toward building a culture of life in America. As President, I've signed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. I have signed legislation supporting maternity group homes. Working with the Congress, we have refused to spend taxpayers' money on international programs that promote abortion overseas. We're opposed to the destruction of embryos for stem cell research. And last November, it was my honor to sign into law a ban on the brutal procedure of partial-birth abortion.

Nellie, I want you to know that our administration is vigorously defending this law against those who would seek to overturn it in the courts. I also want you to know, without your hard work and dedication to the cause of life, these achievements would not have been possible.

But we all know there is still more to do. Earlier this week, I proposed that we double Federal funding for abstinence education programs. We will continue to support crisis pregnancy centers, adoption, parental notification laws, and the vital work of faith-based groups.

I strongly support the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which the House Judiciary Committee approved yesterday. And now the entire Congress should act on this bill so I can sign it into law.

We'll also work with Congress to pass without delay a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning. We can push the limits of medical science while maintaining the highest of ethical standards. Human life is a creation, not a commodity, and should not be used as research material for reckless experiments.

Above all, we must continue, with civility and respect, to remind our fellow citizens that all life is sacred and worthy of protection. I know, as you return to your communities, you will redouble your efforts to change hearts and minds one person at a time. And this is the way we will build a lasting culture of life, a compassionate society in which every child is born into a loving family and protected by law.

Ms. Gray. We pledge that to you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Nellie. I appreciate so very much the opportunity to speak to you and the assembled crowd. May God bless you all, and may He continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. from Roswell, NM, to march participants on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

Remarks in Roswell, New Mexico

January 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Audience member. We love you, President Bush!

The President. Thank you. It's nice to be back in New Mexico. I understand you had reports this morning of an unfamiliar aircraft. [*Laughter*] No worry, it was just me. [*Laughter*] It's good to be back here. The last time I came to Roswell, I wasn't on Air Force One. I was headed to Ruidoso from Midland. [*Laughter*] Roswell was what we call a watering stop. [*Laughter*] You've got great people