

Chris Christie to Evangelicals: It's Not Enough to Be Pro-Life 'In the Womb'

Struggling to shrug off the "Bridgegate" scandal, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie told a group of evangelical Christians on Friday that it is important to be "pro-life" for the entire human lifespan, not just when a fetus is in the womb.

In his first major address to an evangelical conference, Christie urged compassion for drug offenders who may have committed "petty non-violent crimes" to support their drug addiction.

Christie, a Republican, was one of several potential U.S. presidential candidates to address the annual convention of the Faith and Freedom Forum, an organization of the religious right run by Christian activist Ralph Reed.

Christie emphasized the importance of treatment programs instead of prison.

"What works is giving those people the ability to get the tools they need to deal with their disease," Christie said. They need treatment, he said, adding: "If you are pro-life as I am, you need to be pro-life for the whole life.

"You can't just afford to be pro-life when the human being is in the womb. You have to be pro-life after they leave the womb. And sometimes being pro-life then is messy. Sometimes it's difficult, because human beings make bad choices; we are flawed."

Christie, a Roman Catholic, received polite applause as he quoted Pope John Paul II as saying the culture of life should last "from the womb until natural death."

Christie made no mention of the scandal over lane closures leading to the George Washington Bridge that caused huge traffic jams and were apparently orchestrated by Christie allies.

But the speaker who followed him, talk show host Michael Medved, joked that Christie may have been late because he “had a little difficulty because some bridges were closed.” The joke appeared to fall flat, with laughter mixed with groans.

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