

Thousands to 'March for Life' on Roe v. Wade Anniversary

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✖ Tens of thousands of pro-life activists are expected to participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., Friday, including thousands of “virtual” marchers joining in online and dozens traveling from abroad.

As many as 200,000 people have attended previous marches, which are held on the anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion.

This year, Americans United for Life (AUL) Action is hosting a separate Virtual March for Life that has already gained 44,000 participants, including former governors Mike Huckabee and Sarah Palin, and Focus on the Family founder James Dobson.

Virtual marchers will be represented by an avatar chosen at the group's Web site, which will be placed in front of an image of Capitol Hill with other online participants on Friday.

AUL President Charmaine Yoest said the threat of federal abortion funding under the current health care bill makes this year's march “the most important in history.”

“We created the Virtual March for Life to encourage people to be here tomorrow and to give voice to countless Americans who can't be in Washington but wish they could,” Yoest said. “We are encouraging everyone to click and be heard.”

After a morning rally, March for Life participants will begin walking at noon along Constitution Avenue to Capitol Hill,

where activists are being encouraged to lobby their representatives to reject abortion policies in the health care bill and other legislation.

March for Life President Nellie J. Gray said this year's attendees are highly motivated to "stand up," which is the event's theme, and to call on the president, Congress and the Supreme Court justices to do the same.

"[Washington officials] must understand that by allowing abortion in America that they are responsible for about 3,000 pre-born boys and girls being killed every day," Gray told *Charisma*. "And the president should understand that in the first year of his administration approximately 1 million pre-born boys and girls have been killed."

Before the march begins, participants from Africa, Europe, South America, Asia and Oceania will protest what they describe as the Obama administration's "radical expansion of anti-life policies" during a conference hosted by the Catholic group Human Life International (HLI) based in Virginia.

"America's March for Life is now the world's March for Life," said Joseph Meaney, director of international coordination for HLI. "It has become the world's pro-life protest because of the aggressive promotion of abortion and population control that is now official policy of the United States, thanks to the administration of President Barack Obama."

Ligaya Acosta, HLI regional coordinator for Asia and Oceania, said Obama's decision last year to reverse the Mexico City Policy, which banned organizations from promoting abortion overseas, has promoted "assaults on life" in her native Philippines and around the world that have resulted in millions of abortions.

"It is wrong, and we are here to tell him and Congress to stop paying to kill our children," she said.

HLI activists also point to a \$447 billion omnibus spending bill that Congress passed and Obama signed in December. The legislation allocates \$648.5 million for international family-planning groups, without the restrictions of the Mexico City Policy, and \$55 million for the pro-abortion United Nations Population Fund.

“When international aid is tied to abortion, it’s like holding a nation hostage, telling them that children are bad, which translates into hopelessness for the future,” said Raymond DeSouza, HLI coordinator for Portuguese-speaking nations. “This is a terrible violence against the families and children of the developing world.”

At the end of Friday’s march, actress Jennifer O’Neill and pro-life activist Alveda King, niece of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., will share testimonies of how they were hurt by their abortion experiences outside the U.S. Supreme Court building.

The two will be among 45 women scheduled to share their abortion experiences as part of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign. Many participants will carry signs that read: “I Regret My Abortion” and “I Regret Lost Fatherhood.” Similar signs, produced by Silent No More, are expected to be peppered among the March for Life crowd.

“The Silent No More Awareness Campaign was born of the grief, pain and suffering that those of us who have had abortions know all too well,” said ministry co-founder Georgette Forney. “We are growing in number because women have found that abortion is not the answer, it’s the problem.”

Similar March for Life events will be held in cities nationwide.