

Mr. Speaker, I stand on the floor of this House tonight with great hope in my heart for the future of this country, because even a cursory survey of America's history should impart hope to all of us.

By the time the 1860s had come to America, the world had marked 7,000 years of powerful societies enslaving their fellow human beings. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, this was also true of America. However, this country was never truly at peace in her heart with the hellish institution of slavery.

So it was that slaves began to earnestly pray in America for God to intervene. Mr. Speaker, it seems that God sent them Abraham Lincoln, a man who understood the true meaning of those magnificent words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Mr. Speaker, our Founding Fathers wrote those words down for us because they did not want us to forget their true meaning or to otherwise fall prey to those who would deliberately destroy it. This has always been the preeminent reason why we write down documents or agreements or declarations or, Mr. Speaker, constitutions in the first place, to preserve their original meaning and intent.

When the smoke of a horrible Civil War finally drifted from the air, 7,000 years of the world accepting the unrequited toil and misery of human slavery was over. The prayer of slaves had been answered, and the United States of America began to emerge as the true flagship of human freedom in the world.

But only 100 years later, we began to stray from that path. We began to think only of ourselves; and in 1973, Roe v. Wade was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court and brought wholesale abortion-on-demand to the land of the free, and a veil of darkness fell upon America.

In that darkness we heard, but disregarded, the mortal cry of one little baby in the womb, and then another, and even another was heard, until that sound had become the soul-wrenching cry of tens of millions. And we found ourselves and our national conscience disoriented and awash in the blood of our own children. Millions of prayers called out for yet another leader to remind us of those forever words that speak the divine message of human dignity: all men, all men are created equal.

Mr. Speaker, from the time we are conceived, all human beings are created equal. We do not become equal when we reach a certain age or status. This is America's creed. This is our foundation. And how grateful we should all be that our Founding Fathers wrote those words down, and how desperate our commitment should be to remember what they mean.

And now that test has come upon us, for there is soon an opportunity for the President of the United States to nominate individuals to the Supreme Court who understand that

all men are created equal. And Mr. Speaker, I believe in my soul that this President truly understands those words. Indeed, it is his commitment to their meaning that has given him the courage to stand resolutely against terrorists to protect innocent human life. But this president and each one of us must never forget that Roe vs. Wade has taken more than 15,000 times the number of lives lost on that tragic day on September 11. And we now live in a time when there is a glimmer of light breaking on the road before us. But the curve just ahead, Mr. Speaker, is sharp, and to miss it may be to forever plunge into that darkness. And the voice of destiny calls to this president, to our president and to all of us in these decisive days to steel our hearts and to ask anew, is it still true in America that all men are created equal?

Mr. Speaker, our legacy to future generations and the survival of human freedom in the world will depend upon our answer.

May God bless America and may God bless President George W. Bush.