

Henry Hyde was perhaps more responsible than any other Member of this body for allowing me to become a Member of Congress, and I stand here thanking him for his work and for him allowing me to come to this place.

Mr. Speaker, our moment in history is marked by mortal conflict between a culture of life and a culture of death.

God put us in this world to do noble things, to love and to cherish our fellow human beings, not to destroy them. Today, we must choose sides.

Mr. Speaker, those words were spoken by one Henry Hyde, who in 1924 was born in the same State that once gave us an Abraham Lincoln who guided America through that terrible storm that brought about the end of a cancer called slavery that it had embedded itself so deeply in American policy.

That same greatness of spirit that compelled Abraham Lincoln to remind our Nation that all men are created equal also compelled Henry Hyde to spend 32 years of his life serving this body in defense of that same truth.

Mr. Speaker, Henry Hyde said, "We are the heirs of 1776, and of an epic moment in history of human affairs when the Founders of this Republic pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Think of that, their sacred honor, to the defense of the rule of law. The rule of law is to safeguard our liberties. The rule of law is what allows us to live in our freedom in ways that honor the freedom of others."

Mr. Speaker, whether working to overturn the horrors of child sex slavery, of sex trafficking, or advocating to protect victims of human rights abuse, or improving the lives of children, families, seniors, and military veterans, or protecting the innocent from the threat of terrorism, or striving to bring clean water and basic sanitation to the poorest of the poor all over the world, Henry Hyde was truly a man who gave himself to the cause of honoring and protecting the equal, inherent, and profound dignity of every member of the human family.

He carried himself with such honor and dignity and true nobility, and yet never wavered in the strength or perseverance of his convictions. Like President Ronald Reagan, he carried a reputation for being a happy warrior.

And, Mr. Speaker, while the hallmark of Henry Hyde's life was the compassion for all of humanity, the driving force of his work in Congress was the dedication to protecting and restoring the constitutional rights for an entirely unprotected class of humanity he called the "defenseless unborn."

Henry Hyde was instrumental in crafting legislation such as the Mexico City policy and the partial birth abortion ban. Perhaps his most world-changing initiative came in the form of the legendary Hyde amendment which passed 2 years after he first came to Washington in 1976. It prohibited the practice of taxpayers being forced to pay for

abortions. The year before, taxpayer funds had provided for more than 300,000 abortions in America. Mr. Speaker, at the very least, over 1 million little souls have lived to feel the warmth of sunlight and freedom on their faces because of the Hyde amendment and the work of Henry Hyde, and that number could well be in the millions. That is a legacy no words of mine can ever express.

Mr. Speaker, Henry Hyde once said, "This is not a debate about religious doctrine or even about public policy options. It is a debate about our understanding of human dignity, what it means to be a member of the human family, even though tiny, powerless and unwanted."

Henry Hyde was a man of unwavering principle, an unflinching patriot who never hesitated to confront even the fiercest controversies once he believed that he was fighting on the side of truth, God, and human freedom. Not only did he fight tirelessly for those truths, he spoke them so powerfully that he deeply and profoundly moved the heart of America. He stirred this body on countless occasions and helped to rekindle the conscience of this Nation, and the legacy of his words will resonate long after every one of us has walked out of that Chamber for the very last time.

Last month, Mr. Speaker, Congressman Henry Hyde was honored by the President of the United States with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award that can be bestowed on any civilian. "He used his persuasive powers for noble causes" according to the President. "He was a gallant champion of the weak and the forgotten, and a fearless defender of life in all of his seasons."

Mr. Speaker, back in 1857 in the Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court said that the black man was not a person under the Constitution, and it took a civil war to reverse that tragedy.

In the rise of the Nazi Holocaust, we saw the German high tribunal say that Jews were unworthy of being classed as humans, and a tragedy that beggars our understanding followed as a result.

Then in 1973 we saw the Supreme Court of the United States of America take from the innocent unborn children the most basic human right of all, the right to live. And in all three cases, Mr. Speaker, a great human tragedy followed. The Civil War took more lives than any war in our history. The world war that arrested the Nazi Holocaust took 50 million lives worldwide, and even saw atomic bombs fall on cities.

And today we stand in retrospect and wonder how the compassion of humanity did not rise in defense of those who could not defend themselves when such horrible atrocities might have been prevented. And yet, there and here, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, we have killed 50 million of our own children in what should have been the safe sanctuary of their own mother's wombs. They died nameless and alone, their mothers were never the same, Mr. Speaker, and all of the gifts those children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Mr. Speaker, there is no way for me to add to the power of the immortal words of that gallant statesman, Henry Hyde himself. He said something I wish that every American, every person on Earth could hear. He said, "When the time comes, as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the final judgment, I've often thought, as Fulton Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness. You have no advocates. You are there standing alone before God, and a terror will rip through your soul like nothing you can imagine. But I really think that those in the pro-life movement will not be alone. I think there will be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world, but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world. And they will plead for everyone who has been in this movement. They will say to God, spare him because he loved us. And God will look at you and say, not did you succeed, but did you try?"

Mr. Speaker, Henry Hyde truly tried. And I am convinced that the day will still come in America when the warm sunlight of life will finally break through these clouds and shine once again on the faces of unborn children in this Nation. And when that day comes, history will record that it is a great champion named Henry Hyde who waged a quiet war for the defenseless unborn in the Halls of this Congress. And he reached up to hold the hand of an unseen God and reached down to hold the hand of an unnamed little baby and refused to let go until the storm was gone.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I'm wrong, and somehow America never finds its way out of this horrible darkness of abortion on demand, I know more than anything else in the world that the Lord of the universe still hears the cries of every last one of his children. And no matter who or where they are, if time turns every star in heaven to ashes, I know in my soul, as Henry Hyde knew in his, that that eternal moment of God's deliverance will come to every last one of them.

Mr. Speaker, Henry Hyde was a true and noble champion and he will live forever in our hearts and minds as a warrior for the cause of human freedom and human life. May his family, his many friends, and loved ones be comforted in the peace and assurance of knowing that their courageous father and husband and friend has been welcomed by an eternal chorus of voices and has now walked safely into the arms of God and heard him whisper, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

God bless Henry Hyde.