

President: ‘Let Us Build a Culture That Cherishes Innocent Life’ President Trump makes the defense of the unborn part of his address to the nation.

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At a memorable spot in the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress Tuesday night, President Donald Trump spoke in defense of the nation’s children.

“Let us work together to build a culture that cherishes innocent life,” he said. “And let us reaffirm a fundamental truth: All children — born and unborn — are made in the holy image of God.”

The remark earned a standing ovation from the Republican members, as well as a few Democrats, but it was greeted with stony silence by most of the Democrats in the chamber.

The image was made even starker by the effort at stagecraft by the Democratic women to dress in white for the evening. The choice of white was intended to show how many Democrat women are now in Congress, but it had the startling effect at that moment of reminding the viewer that virtually every Democrat in Congress is opposed to any piece of legislation that would place any restriction or limitation on abortion up to birth. The timing was especially significant given that throughout much of the speech, both sides — Democrat and Republican — had decided that for this night they would try to maintain some semblance of civility. But when it came to abortion, more even than immigration, the façade of comity and cooperation ended.

Trump spoke about national security, the economy, immigration, trade and other classic policy issues. He introduced special guests for the evening and even made some jokes. When he mentioned, for example, a Holocaust survivor, Judah Samet, who narrowly avoided death in the

synagogue massacre last year, Trump noted that it was Judah's 81st birthday. The members of Congress sang an impromptu *Happy Birthday*, and the president joked to Judah that they would never do that for him.

There were other moments of cordiality, as well. When Trump celebrated that of the hundreds of thousands of jobs created in his first two years, "No one has benefited more from our thriving economy than women, who have filled 58% of the new jobs created in the last year," both parties leapt to their feet. There was mostly similar agreement on the fight against childhood cancer and a plan for nationwide paid family leave. Democrats and many pro-abortion Republicans cheered the president's comment on family leave, "that every new parent has the chance to bond with their newborn child."

Within a few seconds, they disapproved of the president's next words:

There could be no greater contrast to the beautiful image of a mother holding her infant child than the chilling displays our nation saw in recent days. Lawmakers in New York cheered with delight upon the passage of legislation that would allow a baby to be ripped from the mother's womb moments from birth. These are living, feeling, beautiful babies who will never get the chance to share their love and dreams with the world. And then we had the case of the governor of Virginia, where he stated he would execute a baby after birth. To defend the dignity of every person, I am asking Congress to pass legislation to prohibit the late-term abortion of children who can feel pain in the mother's womb.

The State of the Union speech by a sitting president is typically a mixture of measured language of appeals to patriotism and collaboration and political theater. The president offers a laundry list of programs and proposed policies and calls on the other party to work together to pass his or her legislative agenda. Meanwhile, the assembled members of Congress sit either in silence or jubilation, depending on their party affiliation. President Trump's State of the Union was no exception, even though it was one of his most rhetorically coherent and well-written speeches. Trump tried to make the most of his opportunity in this State of the Union before a now divided Congress. He presented his case to the American people as he faces a House of Representatives now under Democrat control and determined to thwart his agenda. Trump knows this, and so began his 2020 re-election campaign. It is significant that in the list of issues that he and his advisers deemed important to feature, including the economy, immigration and security, abortion was one of them.

As the president noted, the recent weeks witnessed passage of one of the most extreme abortion laws in history in New York. Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the New York Legislature tore the mask from the abortion movement. The coming days will witness more states pushing similarly demonic bills to lift all protection of the unborn even to the moment of birth.

As he did in the 2016 presidential campaign, most so in his acrimonious third presidential debate with Sen. Hillary Clinton, Trump was willing, as the saying goes, to go there. On that night in 2016, days away from the election, Trump described in grim detail what actually happens to a child in a so-called partial-birth abortion. “In the ninth month, you can take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb of the mother just prior to the birth of the baby,” Trump said on that evening in October. “Now, you can say that that’s okay. And Hillary can say that that’s okay — but it’s not okay with me.” Clinton tried to explain her support of the barbaric practice, but in doing so, she also displayed for the world the extremist position she endorsed.

In the last weeks, there has seemed a bright red line between the civilized world and an abortion movement growing more extreme with every passing week. The 2020 campaign has begun, and while many issues will play a part in determining the election, Trump has apparently made the defense of the unborn unquestionably part of it.