

NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



California Catholic Bishops' Statement on the Supreme Court Decision Upholding Ban on Partial Birth Abortions

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SACRAMENTO - The California Bishops, gathered in their semi-annual conference in Sacramento, released the following statement on the U.S. Supreme Court's April 18, 2007 ruling in *Gonzales v. Carhart* which upheld the constitutionality of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy said "The government has a legitimate and substantial interest in preserving and promoting fetal life." He also points out that the "government may use its voice and its regulatory authority to show its profound respect for the life within the woman" and acknowledges that "respect for human life finds an ultimate expression in the bond of love the mother has for her child."

The U. S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Gonzales v. Carhart* is an unqualified victory for life and for common sense. In such uncertain and troubled times, what a ray of hope this decision is for the nation and for all of us striving to promote respect for life, including life of the unborn.

It has been over 34 years since the U. S. Supreme Court created the constitutional right to abortion-on-demand, thereby invalidating all existing state laws which banned or curtailed the practice. In 2003, Congress passed an Act which banned the "partial-birth" abortion procedure—resulting in lawsuits by abortion proponents challenging its constitutionality in the federal district courts. Although the ban was ruled unconstitutional in all the lower court decisions, the U. S. Supreme Court's *Gonzales v. Carhart* reverses all of those decisions, and affirms the constitutionality of the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act.

As Bishops, we wholeheartedly welcome this significant decision which both reclaims the State's legislative prerogative to regulate actions affecting the common good and restates our society's interest in preserving life.

We grieve for all who have been hurt by abortion and hope and pray for the day when no woman will want, or feel that she needs, to make such a choice.

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