Gov. Perry: We Must Continue Working to Make Abortion a Thing of the Past

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.
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When God sent the flood waters, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and only Noah and those on his ark survived.

When Jesus entered into the desert and was tested by the Devil.

He fasted for 40 days, and rejected the Devil's temptations.

And when the Israelites were sent into the wilderness, they wandered, lost for 40 years.

Last week, America began its 40th year lost under the rule of Roe v. Wade.

It's a tragic time in our nation's own moral wilderness, four decades of tragedy that have cost more than 54 million innocent children their lives.

More than a million more die with every passing year.

What must sustain us in times like these is our faith and fellowship, sharing the gift of like-minded people who also believe that life is a sacred gift, and are willing to work together in its defense.

At gatherings like these, I feel confident that we will someday make abortion, truly, a thing of the past.

It's been a long struggle, and even in Texas, where we've fought hard for many, many years, we've got a ways to go.

We've banned the use of tax dollars for abortion procedures in our state, and stood strong in the face of the expected backlash from that decision, proclaiming the truth that protecting the rights of abortion providers and protecting women's health are not the same thing.

We've passed laws requiring both parental notification and parental consent to their daughter's abortion, ensuring parents will be involved, ready to provide much-needed guidance and advice at the most critical of moments.

In 2011, we passed, and I'm proud to say I signed, a law that prohibits abortion without the mother first having a sonogram, because we believe that unborn children deserve the respect of recognition before their lives are tragically cut short.

We took those steps to help ensure that those making the decision between life and death make the most informed, responsible, decision possible.

Despite all those efforts, as many as 80,000 lives are lost to abortion each year in our state.

There is much left to do.

Now, again, my goal, and the goal of all of us gathered here today, is to make abortion, at any stage, a thing of the past.

http://governor.state.tx.us/news/speech/18082/
While Roe v. Wade still prevents us from taking that step, it does allow states to do some things to protect life if they can show there is a compelling state interest.

I don't think there is any issue that better fits the definition of "compelling state interest" than preventing the suffering of our state's unborn.

Using the adoption process and community support we can ensure each and every child is born to a loving home.

That is our goal, and someday we will meet that goal.

In the meantime, I'm also calling for measures to ensure the safety of women undergoing this procedure.

Abortion clinics should be held to the same standards as any other kind of surgical facility in the state of Texas.

And we also need to require any physician performing abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital.

These are both matters of common sense, as any patient should have the expectation that facilities being used are up to standards, and that, if there's an emergency situation, they can receive the care they need.

Again, the ideal world is a world without abortion.

Until then, however, we will continue to pass laws to ensure abortions are as rare as possible under existing law.

Devoted Texans across our state haven't stood by while new laws are crafted, however.

From Houston to DFW and all points elsewhere, they're forming organizations and founding life centers to give women and the children they carry a chance at a new life.

They help women who might be in desperate circumstances see that there are options, better options, than stopping the beating heart of their child.

Already, these individuals and their organizations have made a huge difference in the lives of families throughout Texas, spreading information about options available, and helping families realize God's greatest gift: The love of a child.

This is what we mean when we talk about a "culture of life" in Texas.

Thank you all for being here today, and for everything you do to save the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.