



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 18, 2009

No. 76

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 18, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

PROTECTION OF INNOCENT LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to make a comment on the appearance yesterday at my alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, by President Barack Obama. As I said, I am a graduate of the university. My dad is a graduate of the university. My two brothers are graduates of the university. My son is a graduate of the university. I have three nieces who have graduated from the university. It is al-

ways an honor when the President of the United States addresses your university, particularly when he gives its commencement address.

I have known the former president of the University of Notre Dame, Father Hesburgh, for almost my entire life, having met him when I was about 6 years old, and consider him a friend to this day. His record on civil rights is unparalleled in this country, and he is one of the great leaders of the civil rights movement. Now in his nineties, I am sure it was with genuine joy that we saw tears in his eyes as the President of the United States addressed the University of Notre Dame yesterday.

However, Madam Speaker, I must register my concern about the President's address yesterday, and it is because the President has, through his actions and his statements, made very clear his position on a fundamental issue to this Nation, to the question of ethics and morality and public policy. And it is an issue that has generated much controversy, but goes to the essence of the Catholic Church's teaching on the value of life.

The church teaches that there are a number of moral principles upon which there can be serious discussion and disagreement: areas such as a just war; areas about social welfare policy; areas in which the Commandments of our Lord must guide us, but the manner in which those are applied can differ. Those moral judgments are called prudential judgments where we are called upon to use our prudence to come to the conclusions as to our proper actions, both individually and as a society.

But there are a few, and very few, principles upon which there is not prudential judgment but upon which there is specific moral guidance, and protection of innocent life is among them. The question of whether one is ever able to take the innocent life of another intentionally lies at the root of

not only Catholic doctrine, but lies at the root of the Judeo-Christian tradition which has given voice to the Constitution where it says we have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, with life being the first of those three.

So the question was when the President appeared at the University of Notre Dame, was he engaging in a dialogue in which there was an exchange of ideas of substance, or was it an episode in which there would be moral confusion afterwards in which the question of the taking of innocent life was just a prudential judgment type of issue which was the same as many other issues that we can debate and disagree on about whether we should go to war, how we should conduct war, how much money we should pay for welfare programs, what the level of education is, and so forth.

And that's the question that bothers me. I guess the question I could ask would be whether this administration at the University of Notre Dame would have asked Stephen Douglas or Abraham Lincoln to deliver the commencement address following the great debate that took place between those two some 150 years ago. Because one was successful, that is Stephen Douglas, he was elected, he was considered a great man in many different ways, a great statesman; and the other was Abraham Lincoln who had failed in several attempts at election. And the one said that slavery was one of those things upon which you could not essentially disagree when you really looked at the question of whether one man could own another man.

And while he was unsuccessful in that, he carried the moral argument of the day, and the suggestion here is: Was there any dialogue and would the suggestion be that all we have to do is reason together and use better words rather than essentially go to the substance of the issue.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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