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last week because there were so many brilliant, young people on that plane with him from different backgrounds and different racial groups. Why? Because Ron Brown could see in them the promise of a new tomorrow, and he knew they needed someone to reach down and give them the opportunity to serve.

And I hope that is something that none of us will ever forget. For his legacy burns brightly, not only in the lives of his wife and children and other family members but also all of those brilliant young men and women, many of whom are with us today, who walk through the doors that he opened and crossed over the bridges that he built.

I received a lot of letters and calls, like many of you have, since Ron died. I got this letter from Michael Armstrong, the chairman of Hughes Electronics, who was one of the people Ron worked with. And I wanted to read this to you, because so often we think Government operates in a vacuum. Listen to this:

"While the demands of business, the pressures of the Commerce Department, and the politics of Washington can often mask the spirit and character of the dedicated people who try so hard to make a difference for America, the business at hand, the pressures on the Department, and the politics of the moment never dimmed the smile, the energy, the commitment, and the leadership of the man who made such a big difference in the direction and destiny of our country. He led his party to the Presidency. He led the Commerce Department with imagination and distinction. He led American business to new global opportunity. He led his race as an unassuming, but forceful role model. He led us all in being what he believed in. He was truly a leader."

Ron Brown: a trailblazer, a builder, a patriot; a husband, a father, a wonderful friend, and a great American.

Let us remember these things about Ron. Let us always have our joy in the morning. Let us be determined to carry on his legacy. Let us always be vigilant, as he was, in fighting against any shred of racism and prejudice. Let us always be vigilant, as he was, in remembering that we cannot lift ourselves up by tearing other people down, that we have to go forward together. Let us always remember, as he did, that Alexis de Tocqueville was right when he said so many years ago, America is great because America is good. He knew we had to keep working and striving to be better.

In his last sermon from the pulpit, Martin Luther King asked God to grant us all a chance to be participants in the newness and magnificent development of America. That is the cause for which Ron Brown gave his life and the cause for which he gave up his life.

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul said, "Let us not grow weary in doing good. For in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Our friend never grew weary; he never lost heart. He did so much good, and he is now reaping his reward. He left us sooner than we wanted him to leave, but what a legacy of love and life he left behind.

Now he's in a place where he doesn't even have to worry about how good he looks. He always will look good. He's in a place where there's always joy in the morning. He's in a place where every good quality he ever had has been rendered perfect. He's in a place he deserves to be because of the way he lived and what he left to those of us who loved him.

Let there always be joy in the morning for Ron Brown. Amen.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the sanctuary at the National Cathedral.

Remarks on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives Partial Birth Abortion Legislation

April 10, 1996

The President. Good afternoon, I have just met with five courageous women and their families, and I want to thank the Lines, the Stellas, the Watts, the Costellos, and the Ades all for meeting with me. They had to make a potentially life-saving, certainly health-saving, but still tragic decision to have the kind of abortion procedure that would be banned by H.R. 1833.

They represent a small but extremely vulnerable group of women and families in this country, just a few hundred a year. Believe

it or not, they represent different religious faiths, different political parties, different views on the question of abortion. They just have one thing in common: They all desperately wanted their children. They didn't want abortions. They made agonizing decisions only when it became clear that their babies would not survive, their own lives, their health, and in some cases, their capacity to have children in the future were in danger.

No one can tell the story better than them, and I want to call on one of them. But before I do, I want to say that this country is deeply indebted to them for being willing to speak out and to talk about the real facts, not the emotional arguments that, unfortunately, carried the day on this case.

So I'd like to ask Mary-Dorothy Line to come up here and introduce herself and say whatever she'd like to say about why we're all here today.

[*Mary-Dorothy Line described the circumstances and complications of her pregnancy which made the procedure medically necessary. Mrs. Line remarked that she was grateful that option was available to them. She voiced her hope that the same thing would not happen to anyone else, and concluded by saying that the option is available to those that need it, thanks to the President, who understood that this was not an issue about abortion but about women's health.*]

The President. Thank you.

I'd like to ask Coreen Costello to come up and speak a little bit about her experience.

[*Mrs. Costello described the circumstances and complications of her pregnancy which made the procedure medically necessary. She concluded by saying that it is not about a choice, but that this is a medical issue, and that she's grateful that the President listened to their story.*]

The President. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Jim and their children, and William.

Would you tell them what you told me in the office? Can you do it? This is Tammy Watts.

[*Tammy Watts said that her story was not so different from everyone else's. She said she's grateful that her doctors were able to perform this very safe medical procedure that saved her health and her family.*]

The President. Thank you, Mitchell—and those are the prints of your baby, right?

[*Ms. Watts showed the President the hand and footprints of her daughter.*]

The President. Vikki, do you want to say anything?

[*Mrs. Stella described the circumstances and complications of her pregnancy which made the procedure medically necessary.*]

The President. Thank you. And you have a baby here.

Mrs. Stella: Yes, I have a little boy here.

The President. You have a 3-month-old little boy here.

Mrs. Stella: Nicholas.

The President. Claudia, would you like to talk?

[*Claudia Ades described the circumstances and complications of her pregnancy which made the procedure medically necessary*]

The President. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you, Richard. Thank you, Mitchell.

Ladies and gentlemen, I asked these families to come here today to make a point that I think every American needs to understand about this bill. This is not about the pro-choice/pro-life debate. This is not a bill that ever should have been injected into that.

This terrible problem affects a few hundred Americans every year who desperately want their children, are trying to build families, and are trying to strengthen their families. And they should not become pawns in a larger debate, even though it is a serious and legitimate debate of profound significance.

I hope that we can continue to reduce the number of abortions in America. When I was Governor I signed a bill to restrict late-term abortions, consistent with the Supreme Court decision of *Roe* v. *Wade*, only cases where the life or health of the mother is at risk. When I asked the supporters of the bill here to try to take account of this, they said, well, if we have a health exception you know you could—the doctor and the mother could say anything—they can't fit in their prom

dress, that's a health exception—some terrible things like that.

And I said, no, no, no, I will accept language that says serious, adverse health consequences to the mother. Those three words. Everyone in the world will know what we're talking about. We're talking about these families. I implored them. I said, if you want to pass something on this procedure, let's make an exception for life and serious adverse health consequences so that we don't put these women in a position and these families in a position where they will lose all possibility of future child-bearing, or where the doctor can't say that they might die, but they could clearly be substantially injured forever.

And my pleas fell on deaf ears. The emotional power of the description of the procedure—which I might add did not cover the procedure these women had and did not cover all the procedures banned by the law—but the emotional power was so great that my plea just to take a decent account of these hundreds of families every year that are in this position fell on deaf ears. And, therefore, I had no choice but to veto the bill. I vetoed it just a few minutes ago before I met with these families.

I will say again, if the Congress really wants to act out of a sincere concern that some of these things are done, which are wrong, in casual ways, then if they will meet my standards to protect these families, they could pass a bill that I would sign tomorrow. But these people have no business being made into political pawns.

As I said, and as they said, they never had a choice. This affects staunchly pro-life families as well as people that are pro-choice. They never had a choice. And I cannot in good conscience see their lives damaged and their potential to build good, strong families damaged.

We need more families in America like these folks. We need more parents in America like these folks. They are what America needs more of. And just because they happen to be in a tiny minority to bear a unique burden that God imposes on just a few people every year, we can't forget our obligation to protect their lives, their children, and their families' future.

That is what this veto is all about. And let me say again how profoundly grateful I am to them for coming here today and having the courage to tell their stories to the American people.

Thank you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:22 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Partial Birth Abortion Legislation

April 10, 1996

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1833, which would prohibit doctors from performing a certain kind of abortion. I do so because the bill does not allow women to protect themselves from serious threats to their health. By refusing to permit women, in reliance on their doctors' best medical judgment, to use this procedure when their lives are threatened *or* when their health is put in serious jeopardy, the Congress has fashioned a bill that is consistent neither with the Constitution nor with sound public policy.

I have always believed that the decision to have an abortion generally should be between a woman, her doctor, her conscience, and her God. I support the decision in *Roe* v. *Wade* protecting a woman's right to choose, and I believe that the abortions protected by that decision should be safe and rare. Consistent with that decision, I have long opposed late-term abortions except where necessary to protect the life or health of the mother. In fact, as Governor of Arkansas, I signed into law a bill that barred third trimester abortions, with an appropriate exception for life or health.

The procedure described in H.R. 1833 has troubled me deeply, as it has many people. I cannot support use of that procedure on an elective basis, where the abortion is being performed for non-health related reasons and there are equally safe medical procedures available.

There are, however, rare and tragic situations that can occur in a woman's pregnancy in which, in a doctor's medical judgment, the