Beat: News

Anti-abortion activists rally in Washington ...

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USPA News - Pro-life activists rallied at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday for the annual `March for Life` that coincides with the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, a landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. Starting out as a small demonstration in 1973, the `March for Life` in Washington, D.C. has grown to be the largest anti-abortion event in the world.

The march is annually held on the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling; the decision that ruled state laws banning abortions except to save the life of the mother were unconstitutional, effectively legalizing abortion. During Wednesday`s event, which focused on the issue of adoption this year, thousands of abortion foes from across the country gathered at the National Mall despite frigid temperatures and slippery snow. "Adoption is a heroic decision for pregnant mothers who find themselves in a difficult situation," said `March for Life` President Jeanne Monahan. According to movement leaders, the latest generation of pro-life activists is creating a more upbeat culture, with supporters blasting dance music, holding placards that read slogans such as "We are the pro-life generation" and large images of a smiling Pope Francis, who is one of their supporters. "I join the March for Life in Washington with my prayers. May God help us respect all life, especially the most vulnerable," the 77-year-old pontiff wrote on his Twitter account. He was joined by other pro-life activists whom also showed their support through social media, using hashtags such as "WhyWeMarch" on Twitter. But others, such as U.S. President Barack Obama, welcomed the decision, commenting that every woman should be able to make her own choices about her body and her health. "We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to protecting a woman`s access to safe, affordable health care and her constitutional right to privacy, including the right to reproductive freedom," he said. Obama added: "And we resolve to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, support maternal and child health, and continue to build safe and healthy communities for all our children. Because this is a country where everyone deserves the same freedom and opportunities to fulfill their dreams." Cecile Richards, the president of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, said two-thirds of the American public has supported access to safe and legal abortions since the landmark ruling more than four decades ago. Nonetheless, it appears the fight over abortion is back in the political spotlight. With a rise in the number of states enacting restrictions, abortion debates have become quite common, particularly in state-level elections. According to the Washington Post newspaper, 53 state abortion restrictions were enacted last year alone, with more restrictions enacted between 2011 and 2013 than in the entire previous decade. The supporters of `March for Life` carry on the legacy of its late founder, Nellie Gray, who met with 30 pro-life leaders at her Washington, D.C. home in 1973 to discuss how to commemorate the first anniversary of Roe v. Wade. With the help of others, Gray founded the `March for Life` and coordinated the peaceful protest out of her Capitol Hill townhouse for the next 39 years. Until her passing in August 2012, Gray continued to advocate for the lives of the "pre-born" and has been described as the "Joan of Arc of the Pro-Life Movement" by Cardinal Sean O?Malley.

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