News



Nuns arrive to participate in the annual March for Life, walk from the Washington Monument to the Supreme Court on Jan. 24, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Ben Curtis)

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Washington — January 24, 2025
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President Donald Trump vowed to support anti-abortion-rights protesters in his second term as tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied in Washington on Friday (Jan. 24) for the annual March for Life.

"We will again stand proudly for families and for life," Trump declared in a prerecorded video address.

Protesters had come to the capital for decades to call for the repeal of *Roe* v. *Wade*, which affirmed a constitutional right to an abortion. Now, with the repeal of *Roe* in 2022, they are now on the inside rather than the outside. With Trump's return to the White House and Republicans in control of Congress, the activists want to build on their victories.

"Our country faces the return of the most pro-family, most pro-life American president of our lifetimes," Vice President JD Vance told the crowd in his in-person speech.

Vance hailed Trump's previous actions on abortion, saying the president "delivered on his promise of ending *Roe*" and appointed hundreds of anti-abortion judges.

Abortion was largely absent from the stack of dozens of executive actions in Trump's first days of office. But he has already made quieter moves on abortion, including pardoning several right to life activists and using wording related to fetal personhood in an executive order rolling back protections for transgender people.

Despite frigid weather, a festive atmosphere surrounded the event as activists showed up with multicolored hats and signs declaring "Life is our revolution" and "MAGA: Make Abortion Gone Again."

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"This is a significant moment in history," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America group. "Yes, we have a march every year but this one is pretty special. … There is a trifecta of pro-life Republicans in the White House and the House and the Senate."

Kristen Cooper, 21, was among several thousand Students for Life America members attending. She said she was especially excited to be at the march with anti-abortion Republicans in the White House.

She said this march was her fourth but the first with a Republican administration. "It's surreal, actually."

Anna Henderson, a teacher at a Catholic high school near Jackson, Michigan, was also attending her fourth march with a busload of her students.

"Just because we have the backing of the administration doesn't mean the fight is over," she said. "We still need to change people's hearts."

Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America, said there is still work to be done, including calling on Trump to defund Planned Parenthood and offer resources such as paid family leave to women with unplanned pregnancies.

"The march now ends on the backside of the U.S. Capitol to remind our representatives that abortion is not only a state issue, but also a local issue and also a federal issue," she said.



People participating in the annual March for Life, walk from the Washington Monument to the Supreme Court on Jan. 24, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Ben Curtis)

Angela Vasquez-Giroux, vice president of communications at Planned Parenthood Action Fund, which supports abortion rights, said: "We know exactly what is at risk and we know the hate and lies they will spew at the March for Life."

The battle over abortion since the 2022 decision, has been in state courts and at the ballot box where voters in seven states approved ballot measures for constitutional amendments on reproductive freedom in November. Legislatures have been fighting back already with proposals that could make such measures more difficult to get passed.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis celebrated the 2024 defeat of an abortion rights amendment on the March for Life stage and boasted about his role in the state-funded campaign against the measure. Voters there supported a state constitutional amendment overturning a six-week abortion ban but Florida requires 60% to pass

constitutional amendments in the state. Most states require a simple majority.

"Most elected officials will say 'Look, what's on the ballot is not their issue — the people can decide,'" DeSantis told the crowd. "And they wash their hands of it and walk away."

Supporters of abortion rights spoke up, too.

"No matter what they said on the campaign trail to win an election, this shows their intentions to continue to attack abortion access," Ryan Stitzlein, vice president of political and government relations for the national abortion rights organization Reproductive Freedom for All, said of abortion-rights opponents.

"Each time one of these has taken place since the *Dobbs* decision, it's been a day to reflect on how much damage that's been caused by that decision and the crisis we continue to live in."

Ellie Smeal, president and founder of the Feminist Majority Foundation, said her group would counterprotest.

"We want to remind people of the popularity of abortion rights and the importance of this issue, that women and men are supportive of people making their own reproductive health decisions," she said.