

Exchange With Reporters Following a Cabinet Meeting January 22, 1993

Withdrawal of Nomination for Attorney General

Q. Mr. President, how difficult was the Zoe Baird decision? How agonizing was it for you?

The President. I'm sad about it. But it wasn't agonizing. I'm sad about it, and I take full responsibility, as I said in my statement, for the way the evaluation was done. I still have a very high regard for her. She is an extraordinary person. And I feel very badly about it, but I'm responsible for it, and I'm going to start this afternoon looking for an Attorney General. And

I have the process set up, and we're going to begin as soon as the lunch hour is over, working on the future. And that's what I intend to focus on.

Q. Will it be a woman?

The President. I have nothing else to say. I'm going to start this afternoon. Thanks.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing Memorandums on Medical Research and Reproductive Health and an Exchange With Reporters January 22, 1993

The President. Please sit down, ladies and gentlemen. Today I am acting to separate our national health and medical policy from the divisive conflict over abortion. This conflict, which stems from the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 20 years ago, has brought to a halt promising research on treatment for serious conditions and diseases that affect millions of Americans, millions of American men, women, and children who include the members of my family and friends of mine and I'm sure virtually every other set of family and friends in the United States. We must free science and medicine from the grasp of politics and give all Americans access to the very latest and best medical treatments.

Today I am directing Secretary of Health and Human Services Shalala immediately to lift the moratorium on Federal funding for research involving transplantation of fetal tissue. This moratorium, which was first imposed in 1988, was extended indefinitely in 1989 despite the recommendation of a blue ribbon National Institutes of Health advisory panel that it be ended. Five years later, the evidence is overwhelming. The moratorium has dramatically limited the development of possible treatment for millions of individuals who suffer from serious disorders, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's dis-

ease, diabetes, and leukemia. We must let medicine and science proceed unencumbered by anti-abortion politics.

Today also marks the beginning of a new national reproductive health policy that aims to prevent unintended pregnancies. Our administration is committed to providing the kind of prenatal care, child care, and family and medical leave that will lead to healthy childbearing and support America's families. As a nation, our goal should be to protect individual freedom while fostering responsible decisionmaking, an approach that seeks to protect the right to choose while reducing the number of abortions. Our vision should be of an America where abortion is safe and legal, but rare.

Let me also say that our administration is particularly concerned with the epidemic of teenage pregnancy. The greatest human cost of our continuing national debate over reproductive policy is borne by our children and by their children. A few teenagers choose to have and raise children, and we must help them to succeed. But for millions a teen pregnancy is unintended, leaving the young woman and her partner totally unprepared for the responsibilities of parenthood. The social and economic price paid today and for the last several years by our Nation is enormous.