

**Dean Scontras, Candidate for Congress, Maine Congressional District 1**  
**Remarks to the *Hands Around the Capitol* Gathering**  
**January 12, 2008, Augusta, Maine**

Thank you, Pastor Bob Emrich, for that introduction. I am glad it wasn't a full-blown speech. I've followed your speeches twice now, and it is always a tough act to follow. Thank you. Thank you also to Maine Right to Life for inviting me. Thank you to Teresa Tumidajski, Esther Newendyke and all the others who worked so hard to make this event happen.

It is an honor to share the stage with Pastor McNutt, Bishop Malone, Karl Madellini, Senator Weston, Kelly Thomas from the Cheverus High School Pro-Life group. What a wonderful presentation she gave! I am glad she isn't running against me! She gives me hope for the future.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Dean Scontras, candidate for Congress, and I'm Pro Life.

I have always been surrounded by the wonder of life and the joy it brings. In that regard I am blessed. I grew up in a modest house on 30 Love Lane in Kittery. I was the youngest of 7. I was born while my oldest brother was a senior in high school. Subsequently, I became an uncle at the ripe old age of 7. I remember the joy of having new life in the house as my brothers would bring home their babies during the holidays. The feeling of a house teeming with love and life was truly a feeling of plenty. Of those years my wonderful mother – Sophia (which means wisdom in Greek) often says, "I wish I could roll you all back to being children again." With two children of my own, I often offer her the chance of taking them for the day to relive those days!

I never thought that being pro-life would stir so many emotions both in myself and in the people I meet. Believe me when I say that most people I meet are very happy to hear that they will have a pro-life candidate on the ballot. Some people, mostly political pundit-types, ask me why – "Why would you run as a pro-life candidate – You might lose?"

Still others, and mostly those of you who are solidly pro-life, view my declaration a bit more skeptically, as possibly a purely political move. I was eager to seek support of this community, and frankly, I guess I did take for granted the fact that I would have to earn your support. After all, the pro-life community has often been misled, even taken advantage of at times by pundits and politicians who place politics before principle. Some people will do anything to win. Anything.

Even in my race I am facing a primary opponent who is taking money from pro-abortion groups, from groups who have as their goal the removal of the pro-life plank from the Party Platform. I share the concerns of those of you who might require some reassurance before you put your support behind another politician claiming to be pro-life. When you ask me, "Dean, are you unequivocally, without exception, for life?" I will answer, "Yes, I am!"

I want to share a short story with you. It's one I haven't shared yet on the trail, afraid that I may not be able to make it through the whole thing without shedding a tear.

I remember hearing my son Jackson's heart beat for the first time. Towards the beginning of my wife's pregnancy, her doctor was unable to detect a heartbeat. He told us to return in a few days and he would try again.

The waiting was terrible. We suspected the worst. In the days following that visit there were tears. There were prayers. There were sleepless nights. Many of you have been there. You want so much to see any sign of life that *your* life is put on hold. I couldn't concentrate on anything.

A few days later the doctor booted up the ultrasound machine. We waited... he searched. The silence, as they say, was deafening. Then, like a drumbeat from out of the heavens, "Boom-Boom! Boom-Boom! Boom-Boom!" 160 beats per minute! It was both strong and fragile. It echoed on the ultrasound machine like a communication from some distant place. We cried, this time for joy!

Each time we returned to the doctor I would anxiously wait to hear it. Inevitably the doctor would shift the ultra sound in just the right way. "Boom-Boom, Boom-Boom!" It was Jackson telling us how he was doing in the only way he could at the time.

The heartbeat of the unborn is the first and most enduring sign of life. It is surprisingly strong to those who've never heard it before. As I would learn over the next several months, when the baby slept the heartbeat was softer, slower. When he was awake it was faster and louder. Even as my son came into the world nine months later, his heartbeat maintained 160 beats a minute. He was as alive as he was before he was born. The only thing that changed in his young life was his surroundings!

Last week I watched my now six-year old son playing. He was playing with some much bigger boys, yet he played with a determination that matched theirs ounce for ounce, inch for inch. Though I couldn't hear it, I suspect his heart was racing as he tried to keep up. From my vantage I could not hear the heartbeat, but I saw the spirit, and it was boundless.

One of my personal heroes, John Paul II used to remark about the specter of darkness that was descending upon Europe as they moved away from their religious traditions and values toward an aggressively secular culture. He called this "The culture of death." Cultural values are also influenced by our movies, our music, by "pop" culture, and yes, by our politics.

Values and virtues have historically been protected and preserved and passed along by parents. Here in Maine we have recently seen the culture eroding. We see increased pressure to redefine marriage and family. At King Middle School in Portland we recently saw an institutional attempt wrestle parental authority away from the parents.

To you who ask me "Dean, will you speak up when our culture of life is under assault at our schools, in our towns and in our country?" To you I say, "Yes, I will!"

When I was in school I was very involved in sports. I had a quote taped in my locker that I would see each time I opened it:

**Too often we are scared.  
Scared of what we might not be able to do.  
Scared of what people might think if we tried.  
We let our fears stand in the way of our hopes.  
We say no when we want to say yes.  
We sit quietly when we want to shout.**

I am always taken aback when people on the campaign trail come up and whisper to me, "Thank you for saying you are pro-life." They feel the need to whisper that.

Well, today is the day we shout it. We are pro-life!

Thank you.