

Mr. Speaker, today marks a tragic anniversary in American history. It was on this day in 1857 that the Supreme Court of the United States handed down the now famous Dred Scott v. Sandford ruling, saying that Dred Scott, a black man born into slavery but living in a free State, was not a United States citizen and could not sue for his freedom in Federal court.

In a 7-2 ruling handed down by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, a former slave owner from Maryland, the court found that the black man was not a person under the Constitution; that he was property and not a person; and that as such, he was both prohibited from bringing suit against any citizen in Federal court and was made subject to the fifth amendment of the Constitution which prohibits taking property from its owner without "due process."

The court said that all blacks, slaves as well as free, were not and could never be citizens of the United States, and determined that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his," the white man's, "benefit."

By that one ruling, nearly 4 million slaves living in America were deemed by an erudite judiciary as less than human, unworthy to be protected; and it took an entire Civil War to reverse the tragedy of that decision.

Dred Scott tasted the freedom that he believed was the birthright of every human soul only a short time because tragically, after his emancipation in May of 1857, he lived in the freedom that he longed for for only 9 months before he passed away.

Today we remember the horrendous scar upon the soul of our Nation of slavery and the Dred Scott decision. And we all stand in retrospect and wonder how those people in that day could have been so blind to the unalienable truth that all men are created equal.

And yet today, Mr. Speaker, here in the land of the free and the home of the brave, we have allowed almost 50 million of our own unborn children to be killed in their mothers' wombs as a result of yet another Supreme Court decision that denied their personhood and the most basic constitutional right of all, that being the right to live.

It has now been exactly 12,827 days since the travesty called Roe v. Wade was handed down by the Supreme Court. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of its own children.

Yet today, even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims yet today, those yet unborn.

Winston Churchill said Americans always do the right thing after they have exhausted every other possibility. Americans are coming to realize that the avenues of heartlessness and selfishness are now exhausted. Americans are beginning to understand that if we as a

society do not possess the courage and the will to protect innocent unborn children, that in the final analysis we will never find the will or the courage to protect any kind of liberty or rights for anyone.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson said: ``The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

Mr. Speaker, the rise and fall of slavery in America, if it teaches us anything, it is that the evil about us eventually and completely collapses upon itself. The time is long past for Roe v. Wade, the bloodiest court decision in the history of humanity, to take its place alongside the Dred Scott decision in the ash heap of history.