



PROChoice

Newsletter of WCLA

WCLA-PAC and ProChoice Voter

Vol. 31, No. 3 Autumn, 2002

On To Victory In November

Con- gratu- lations pro- choice voters! We did it! Noam Bramson defeated Ron Tocci for the



Democratic nomination by an astonishing 2 to 1 vote. But now the real fight begins.

Despite this huge win, Bramson will again run against Tocci. After being resoundingly defeated in the Democratic primary, Tocci will appear on the Republican, Conserva- tive, Independence and Working Family party lines in the November election, while retaining enrollment in the Democratic party.

Bramson, a member of the New Rochelle City Council, was formerly a key aide to Congresswoman Nita Lowey, the leader in the House for choice. Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, WCLA board chair, cited Bramson's long record of service with Congress- woman Nita Lowey as invaluable experience. "Nita has been a national champion for choice. Her staff is the best possible training ground for a pro-choice leader. Noam has worked at Nita's side to defend choice, support international family planning, and improve women's health."

See Bramson on page 4

McCall/Mehiel Pro-Choice, Pataki/Golisano Anti-Choice

The New York gubernatorial election presents an absolutely clear choice for pro-choice voters. H. Carl McCall has an unequivocal record supporting a woman's right to choose. McCall knows the issues, and has always been and will continue to be a strong proponent of reproductive freedom. In contrast, his opponents, Gov. Pataki and Tom Golisano, are in many ways like two peas in a pod. They both claim to be pro-choice but their respective voting records and campaign statements are packed full with limita- tions.

Right to Life Party Weighs In

Pataki has voted, made appoint- ments and set policy clearly intent upon

limiting a woman's right to choose. (See chart page 5.) His voting record has been so extreme in its anti-choice tenor that in 1992 the Westchester RTL explained in its voting guide that, "he [Pataki] has a pro-life (sic) voting record" and even as he campaigned as pro-choice, he sought its help "behind the scenes." In 1993 Pataki earned a 100 percent



See McCall on page 4

Alan Hevesi—Lifelong Advocate for Choice



WCLA is proud to join NARAL and NOW-NYS in endorsing Alan Hevesi for NYS comptroller.

Hevesi, a champion of abortion rights and women's

rights, handily won the Democratic primary for state comptroller, the position being vacated by H. Carl McCall. As an active proponent of choice, Hevesi has an impressive track record and has earned the enthusiastic endorsement of the pro-choice commu- nity.

As a pro-choice legislator

In 1972, during his first term in the Assembly, Hevesi took charge of the passionate conflict over the earliest attempt to repeal a woman's right to choose. For the next 21 years in the Assembly, Hevesi was the leader of the legislators who sided with the pro- choice movement. As chair of the Health Committee, Hevesi was instru- mental in preserving abortion rights in the late 70's and led the charge to keep Medicaid funding of abortion. He continued his advocacy as NYC comp- troller, remaining in the forefront of the abortion battles.

Hevesi understands the important role the office of comptroller can play when it comes to choice. If elected

See Hevesi on page 6

A Six-Letter Word

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett
WCLA Board Chair



Voting. A six letter word that has topped the list of our rights. People have died for it, fasted, marched, participated in every possible form of uprising to win it. To vote is to be a decision-maker, to have power. Now, finally, just about every U.S. citizen 18 and over can vote. Now about 50% of the voting population stays home.

Every first Wednesday in November there is a small group of people who wake up with an emotional hangover. We are the issue people, the true optimists in our society, the folks who believe that we can change the world for the better. We are on all sides of every issue, and we believe that this time we've grasped the holy grail; we've presented the issue so clearly and effectively that the public will not be able to help themselves; they will care and they will...vote.

However, at about 10 p.m. on Tuesday night the election returns come in, showing fewer people voted than ever before.

Too often these days, elections are decided not by who votes but by who stays home. On election night not long ago, a friend of mine was telephoning voters reminding them to vote. He called a woman who had stated in the past that she was committed to the candidate in that hotly contested race. But on election night she explained that no, she had not voted, nor would she because she was too tired. The woman lived directly next door to her voting precinct. I have no doubt that that woman felt no responsibility for the fact that her candidate lost that election.

See Voting on page 11

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237 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605
914/946-5363

Treasurer: Joseph Melhado

WCLA-PAC

237 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605

Treasurer: Adam Bradley

ProChoice Voter

300 Martine Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601

Treasurer: Liz Shollenberger

Editor: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett

Circulation: 70,000

On the President Emerita's Mind

By Polly Rothstein



Thank you for the kind comments about my column in the last issue. It pleased me to learn that quite a few readers were happy to know that I'm not one-dimensional and actually have a life beyond WCLA — family, friends, and my favorite pursuit, birding. I enjoyed writing about what birding has meant to me for 33 years. Old friends were glad I said these things.

It's October. Guess what's on emerita's mind. Right, elections. I am very apprehensive about the 2002 elections because they will determine the status of abortion rights for years to come. As the Senate goes, so go the big issues. Federal appeals court judges and Supreme Court justices could cut the rug from under us. Progressives would be well advised to take a line from the 1992 Clinton war room and say, "It's the judiciary, stupid." Quietly, the Christian right is praying for the same thing.

A Republican majority in the Senate would confirm Bush nominations that meet the ideological criteria of the Christian right. I so wish people would realize how fragile our rights are. I'd be justified in typographically screaming in bold face underlined italic capital letters.

See Polly on page 12

Editorial

WCLA Decides

Every election season WCLA determines which candidates to support and which to oppose. The Board considers several factors in making these determinations. First, we send a questionnaire to all candidates running in primary and general elections, except those on the Right to Life ticket and candidates for judgeships. After reviewing the returned questionnaires we also consider a candidate's record if s/he has one. Then the Board considers factors such as leadership. Has the candidate been a leader on choice? Will s/he be one?

See Editorial on page 12

Wanted: Voters on Nov. 5, 2002

In the years to come, history books will record 2002 as The Year of the Attack. Those books will not be referring to international events, the Al Qaeda or Saddam Hussein, but instead to the stealth attack on a woman's right to choose. While focusing attention on terrorism and war, the Bush administration is systematically moving ahead to severely limit if not eradicate Roe v. Wade.

We the public have two responses available to us: 1. To sit home and do nothing; or 2. To vote. Truthfully, option one is not acceptable, at least not to anyone who supports choice. The only way to influence government is by pulling a lever on Tuesday, November 5th. The WCLA pro-choice community has a lot of past accomplishments of which to be proud. Let's do it again! Vote!

Eliot Engel: A Long Pro-choice History



Congressman Eliot Engel first distinguished himself as an informed advocate for choice in the state Assembly. He went on to Congress representing the 17th Congressional District as a staunch pro-choice advocate. Always eager to educate, he is a willing participant in public events and press conferences on the pro-choice issue.

Eliot Engel faces Green Party candidate Elizabeth Shanklin, Republican anti-choice candidate C. Scott Vanderhoef and an RTL candidate.

Political analysts say that incumbents are most vulnerable immediately after a redistricting, especially if they must "introduce" themselves to voters in a "new" territory. Because of redistricting, Eliot Engel's new district lines represent a significant shift. It resulted in reducing the Bronx portion of the district to under 45%. The Westchester portion is now about 25% of the district while Rockland represents around 30%.

The pro-choice community can make the difference for Eliot Engel in this election.

Amy Paulin: Leader for Women

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, who represents the 88th District in the New York State Assembly, has been an unwavering advocate for choice throughout her 20-year career as a community activist and elected official. WCLA endorses Assemblywoman Paulin in her race for re-election over her anti-choice opponent, newcomer Tony Sayegh, a Republican.

Paulin, a former board member of WCLA, resigned to run her first race for the Assembly two years ago. Her record shows that she has served in positions of authority to advance the interests of women and children as founding chair of the Westchester Women's Agenda, the county chair of the League of Women Voters, and Executive Director of My Sisters' Place. Alongside Polly Rothstein, she led the successful effort to get

Westchester County to provide family planning coverage for county employees. She was also liaison to the New York State Choice Coalition for the League of Women Voters.



In her first two years, Paulin has not only supported the frontline issues on choice and reproductive health in the Assembly but has also taken a leadership role. She helped pass the Women's Health and Wellness Bill. She fought against efforts to reduce Medicaid funding for family planning and parental consent laws that would inhibit teenagers from accessing reproductive health services. She opposed broad "conscience clauses" that would exempt employers,

See Paulin on page 8

Sandy Galef: Our Choice

Sandy Galef has been an outstanding member of the NYS Assembly since 1992 and, prior to that, a County Board legislator for 14 years. WCLA has endorsed her in every election and this year is no exception. Sandy Galef's re-election is especially important now because her opponents, Republican



Vincent Tamagna and RTL member Patricia A. Vasta, are extreme anti-choice candidates.

In an attempt to hide his views on choice, Tamagna refuses to return questionnaires or answer questions on the subject. Calls made to Tamagna Campaign Headquarters by WCLA staff requesting information concerning Tamagna's position on choice were not returned. In fact, it is reported that Tamagna told Planned Parenthood of

See Galef on page 6

rating from the NYS Christian Coalition and New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedom, the leading religious right groups in the state.

Both Pataki and Golisano have stated they would sign into law a ban on “partial-birth abortions” as well as legislation requiring parental consent or notification. Golisano would also deny millions of women reproductive choice by opposing Medicaid funding. Although Pataki permits Medicaid waivers for contraceptive services for women whose income is at or below 200 percent of poverty, in 1984, '86, and '88, NYS and Westchester Right to Life endorsed Pataki based on his voting record to eliminate Medicaid funding even for rape and incest as well as for his support for a “Human Life Amendment” to the Constitution.

Standing up for choice

And then there is McCall. As comptroller, when the Christian Right orchestrated a campaign to halt corporate contributions to family planning services, McCall changed pension fund policy and used New York's shareholder power to vote against this obvious attack on reproductive freedom. The resolutions were defeated. McCall has protested the State's assignment of Medicaid patients to managed care plans that don't provide family planning services. He has criticized the State's failure to contract with third-party family planning providers when diocese-run Medicaid-only HMO Fidelis refused to provide reproductive services and was the only insurer available to participants in public health programs. (Knowing that Roman Catholic Fidelis does not offer family planning, sterilization, or abortion, Pataki permitted Fidelis to buy another Medicaid-only HMO and absorb its 20,000 low-income clients. Does Pataki believe those 20,000

low-income clients don't deserve those services?)

McCall's running mate for Lt. Governor is Dennis Mehiel who is pro-choice. As early as 1988, Mehiel made his commitment to choice unequivocally clear when, in a run for Congress, he stated, “I pledge to take a leadership role in maintaining this fundamental constitutional right [reproductive rights].”

Pataki again chose anti-choice Mary O. Donohue for his running mate.

It really does matter

The governor is the most powerful person in the state with regard to abortion and family planning. S/he proposes, signs, and vetoes legislation. S/he has budget power and makes crucial appointments such as Commissioner of Health and high-level judges. Pataki's past actions have shown that he is not pro-choice. Gratefully, the Assembly and Speaker Sheldon Silver have stopped Senate bills attempting to limit abortion rights from reaching Pataki's desk and thereby prevented him from signing them into law. The pro-choice community cannot afford to take this chance. Pataki must go.

WCLA has endorsed H. Carl McCall for governor not only because he has always been an advocate for choice but also because his tenure in public office and the diversity of positions he has held (comptroller, state senator, Ambassador to the United Nations, Commissioner of the State Department of Human Rights, and the president of the New York City Board of Education) have given him the opportunity to see the importance of a woman's right to choose and to be a vocal proponent of choice.

“In contrast to his opponent, Noam Bramson knows the issues, is strongly pro-choice and intends to be a vocal advocate for women's reproductive health and freedom in the Assembly,” said Lederer-Plaskett.

Tocci aims to deceive voters

Refusing to debate Bramson before the primary, Tocci has tried to avoid defending/explaining his anti-choice votes. (He has also failed to return the WCLA questionnaire, again.) Yet Tocci clearly knows the importance of the pro-choice community because he tried to deceive voters by using misleading, unauthorized quotes by leading pro-choice advocates in primary election mailings. WCLA wrote Tocci months ago specifically warning him against using past correspondence out of context. But Tocci proceeded to do just that. WCLA has not endorsed Tocci since 1994. Why? His record. (See chart, page 5.) He has gone out of his way to place qualifiers on a woman's right to choose. He describes himself as pro-choice because he knows that the majority of the electorate is pro-choice. However, he has reneged on his commitment to reproductive rights.

What's at stake?

Roe v. Wade is hanging by a thread in Washington. The Bush Administration takes every opportunity to appoint right wing extremists to sensitive positions in Washington. It is essential that candidates for state offices are strongly committed to choice.

“Noam will be a leader for choice. He understands that being pro-choice means trusting women and their doctors to make the right decisions,” said Lederer-Plaskett. “By contrast, Ron Tocci has voted for government restrictions on our fundamental liberties. Mr. Tocci claims to be pro-choice, but his regular support for dangerous anti-choice legislation tells a very different story.”

Noam Bramson is the only pro-choice candidate in this race!

**Protect Your Rights!
VOTE!!!**

'No Choice' Candidates—In Brief

George Pataki

As an anti-choice legislator

In 1984, '86, and '88, NYS and Westchester Right to Life endorsed Pataki based on:

- his voting record to eliminate Medicaid funding even for rape and incest,
- his support for a "Human Life Amendment" to the Constitution,
- his support for mandatory parental involvement for minors.

In its 1992 voter guide, Westchester RTL explained that though Pataki claimed to be pro-choice, "he has a pro-life [sic] voting record" and even as he campaigned as pro-choice, he sought its help "behind the scenes."

Also in 1993, Pataki earned a 100 percent rating from the NYS Christian Coalition and New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedom, the leading religious right groups in the state.

Anti-choice actions as governor

- named Dr. Antonia Novello, an abortion opponent, to be health commissioner.
- permitted the diocese-run Medicaid-only HMO Fidelis Health Care to buy another Medicaid-only HMO and absorb its 20,000 low-income clients. Roman Catholic Fidelis does not offer family planning, sterilization, or abortion.
- named Rev. John Bonnici to be a trustee of the City University of New York (April 2002). Rev. Bonnici, director of the NY Archdiocese Family Life/Respect Life Office, is dedicated to opposing abortion, contraception, and gay rights.

Pataki has stated that he would:

- permit mergers of Roman Catholic and nonsectarian hospitals where Catholic doctrine would prevail and eliminate reproductive healthcare.
- sign a ban on "partial-birth abortions."
- sign a parental consent or notification bill.

John Faso

A perfect voting record in the eyes of the NYS Right to Life Party.

- voted to support the so-called "partial birth abortion" ban in 1999.
- voted against medicaid funding of abortions in 1999, 2000 and 2001.
- voted against legal protections for women entering family planning clinics in 1999.
- voted against requiring coverage of contraceptives when insurance policies cover prescription drugs in 2001.

Since he decided to run for comptroller, Faso has tried to re-make himself; he is trying to pass himself off as pro-choice

because he needs your votes. But he can't fool WCLA or the pro-choice community!

RON TOCCI

The "anti-choice" choice

- voted to ban so-called "partial-birth abortion" in 1996, 1997, and 1999. (The only Westchester member to do so.)
- the only Westchester Assemblymember, regardless of party affiliation, who failed to sign on as a sponsor of The Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, introduced by Amy Paulin (88 AD), to make emergency contraception available without a prescription in New York.
- introduced a bill (A6768) which would allow wrongful death actions to be brought on behalf of a fetus in utero. The bill would give a family standing to sue for wrongful death upon "fertilization," thereby, in effect, defining an embryo as a person from fertilization to birth.
- the NYS Pro-Life [sic] News said that Tocci "deserved accolades, because the Democratic Party in the northeast makes it very uncomfortable for its members to stand up for life."
- intentionally aimed to deceive voters by using misleading, unauthorized quotes by leading pro-choice advocates, in mailings, in September 2002.

Sue Kelly

No Friend to Choice

A sampling:

- voted to defund UNFPA and to reestablish the global gag rule in 1995.
- voted against an amendment which would have allowed funds appropriated pursuant to a crime bill to be used to protect health clinics in 1995.
- voted in favor of the so-called "partial birth abortion" ban in 1995, 1996 and 2000.
- voted in favor of the Child Custody Protection Act in 1998, 1999 and 2002.
- voted in favor of a ban on cloning in 2001.

Kelly has been making Newt and George proud. We must hold her accountable!

Please help us by using
the coupon on page 13.
Thank you!

Kudos to Eliot Spitzer



Eliot Spitzer has been a stellar attorney general for the last four years. In 1998,

Spitzer defeated then-incumbent Attorney General Dennis Vacco with the strong support of abortion rights groups. (WCLA-PAC made 86,000 get-out-the-vote calls for him.)

He has lived up to his promises to support and enforce laws that protect a woman's right to choose, and to prosecute extremists who attempt to unlawfully interfere with that right. Shortly after taking office, Spitzer created the first Reproductive Rights Unit, and recruited Jennifer Brown, a Yale Law graduate then in the U.S. Attorney's Office, to lead it.

Whether enforcing the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law or investigating the business practices of Crisis Pregnancy Centers or filing a friend of the court brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold a Colorado law that established an eight-foot "no approach" zone outside reproductive health offices, Spitzer has shown a great understanding of and an unwavering commitment to the many issues confronting a woman's right to choose today.

We, the NY pro-choice community, are very lucky that Eliot Spitzer is our attorney general.

NY Needs Nita

Nita Lowey has been the leading advocate of reproductive rights in the U.S. House of Representatives. Rather than merely a reliable vote she has been a voice and a vote for issues critical to women. A long-time friend of

WCLA, Nita Lowey advocates and educates. Through articles and speeches she provides insight into issues confronting the national and international pro-choice community. She is a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee where the majority of reproductive rights votes take place.



The lucky voters in the newly redistricted 18 CD should make sure to vote for this national leader and spokeswoman on reproductive rights issues. Lowey's only opponent this year is running on the Right to Life line.

Selendy for Choice

WCLA is endorsing Janine Selendy who is running against anti-choice Sue Kelly and an RTL candidate for the seat in the 19th district of the US House of Representatives. One of Selendy's most satisfying areas of focus is her commitment to women's reproductive rights. As the Founder, Chair and President of HORIZON International, which is dedicated to furthering environmental, health, population and development solutions, Selendy was instrumental in reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases, especially among teenagers, in Mexico and South Africa. Selendy has been a consultant for the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation Population Program, among others.

Kelly has repeatedly disappointed reproductive rights advocates. She solicited the support of the pro-choice community in the 1994 and 1996 elections and then turned against the movement. She got in step with her party's anti-choice platform on a

myriad of votes both procedural and substantive. (See chart page 5.)

Galef, from page 3

Hudson-Peconic that he did not want their endorsement!

In sharp contrast, Sandy Galef has championed the reproductive rights of women throughout her five terms in the NYS Assembly. As a member of the Assembly Health Committee, Galef holds a key position in Albany and has used it to support the right of all women to safe and accessible reproductive health care. This year she worked hard to assure that the newly adopted Women's Health and Wellness law require job-based insurance plans to cover contraception.

Galef is running on the Democratic and Independence party lines. Due to redistricting, the 90th district lost Yorktown and gained parts of Putnam County.

We need to keep Sandy Galef in Albany and she deserves our support on election day.

Hevesi, from page one

comptroller of New York State, he will use the office as a bully pulpit to continue to defend the issues he has fought for since 1972. For example, if the Christian Right again orchestrates a campaign to halt corporate contributions to family planning services, Hevesi, like McCall before him, will be there to use New York's shareholder power to vote against this obvious attack on reproductive freedom.

The choice is clear

In contrast, his opponent John Faso's voting record is that of an anti-choice extremist. Until June 2001, Faso (R, 102 AD) had a perfect voting record in the eyes of the NYS Right to Life Party. (See chart page 5.)

WCLA asks the pro-choice community to join WCLA in voting for Hevesi and resoundingly defeating Faso.

Don't forget to Vote Nov. 5

WCLA's NYS Senate: Our Advocates

District 34 Frances Mahony



Pro-choice Frances Mahony is working to oust Senator Guy Velella, one of only two anti-choice legislators representing Westchester. Velella has said, "It is going

to be a hard election for me no matter what" because he is facing a 25-count indictment handed up by Manhattan District Attorney Morgenthau. WCLA is happy to endorse Frances Mahony.

District 35 Nick Spano



Nick Spano's leadership in holding the line on reproductive rights in the Republican controlled, and increasingly conservative, NYS Senate deserves special mention.

Spano co-sponsored

the Women's Health and Wellness bill which, after four years, has finally become law. He consistently votes for medicaid funding for abortion and against parental notification requirements and the so-called "partial birth abortion" ban. WCLA hopes that next session we will see Spano's proposed legislation requiring all hospitals offer emergency contraception in the emergency room to rape survivors become law.

District 36 Ruth Hassell-Thompson



WCLA is proud to endorse Ruth Hassell-Thompson for her second term in Albany. A sponsor of the Women's Health and Wellness bill and The Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, Hassell-Thompson, who was a former Mt. Vernon

Councilwoman, is making her name as a pro-choice advocate.

District 37 Suzi Oppenheimer

WCLA has endorsed Senator Suzi Oppenheimer in every election. 2002 is no exception. Oppenheimer has fought tirelessly against Senate anti-choice bills. Her annual floor speeches in favor of Medicaid funding are legendary. She also fights annually for family planning and teen pregnancy-prevention programs.

Oppenheimer's opponents are Irving Scharf who is on the Republican Conservative, and Independence Party lines and an RTL candidate. Both are clearly anti-choice!



Mike Spano Makes His Choice

Assemblyman Michael Spano is running for re-election against Pasquale Fiorelli, a novice Democrat. WCLA is happy once again to endorse Spano. While Fiorelli is rated pro-choice, he has no record and has not yet established himself as an advocate on the issue. On the other hand, Spano has distinguished himself as a quiet leader in the Assembly and has been seen working on his Republican colleagues to support reproductive rights whenever the subject comes up.

Recently, Spano made his own 'choice.' His high school alma mater, Sacred Heart of Yonkers, had invited him to a dinner at which he and several other graduates were to be inducted into the school's 2002 Hall of Fame. Needless to say Spano was thrilled and quickly agreed to go the dinner dance at which the induction would take place. Spano's friends and family were all invited. In mid-September, Spano was told that his name was being removed from the list of inductees *because of his support of abortion rights* and he was asked to decline the invitation. When Spano said he would attend the dinner even though he would not be honored, Sacred Heart High School announced that the dinner was canceled. When contacted by WCLA, Spano said, "I am very proud of the fact that I've always stood up for women's reproductive rights. For any organization to suggest or imply that I would change my position to get an award is offensive and I will not do it."

Michael Spano clearly deserves our thanks and strong support at the ballot box.

Assembly: ProChoice and Endorsed

District 87 Gary Pretlow

First elected to the Assembly in 1992, Pretlow has a perfect record on choice. A sponsor of the Women's Health and Wellness bill and The Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, Pretlow is an informed voice on choice issues. He has earned the support and endorsement of WCLA. Pretlow is running unopposed for re-election.

District 92 Richard Brodsky

Over the course of his 19 years in the Assembly, Brodsky has proven himself to be a solid vote for choice. His advocacy for women's rights merits WCLA's endorsement.

**Protect
Freedom of Choice**

insurance companies, and HMOs from providing or covering reproductive health services. Paulin has also taken the initiative by writing and sponsoring an emergency contraception bill which would allow pharmacists to dispense emergency contraception without a personalized prescription from a doctor. This would provide a lifeline to domestic violence victims whose abusers often deny them access to doctors or traditional methods of birth control.

In contrast to Assemblywoman Paulin, her opponent, 25-year-old Tony Sayegh, has no track record on choice at all. His statements to WCLA reveal a shocking lack of commitment to reproductive freedom. For example: He does not oppose mergers of nonsectarian and religiously affiliated hospitals and HMOs which would result in the end of family planning services. While claiming to believe that government should not play a role in the abortion debate, he would require a woman to receive state-written counseling before being allowed to have an abortion. He would also allow pharmacists to refuse to dispense medications that conflict with their religious beliefs, such as emergency contraception.

On the issue of choice there is no contest in this race. Assemblywoman Amy Paulin is the *only* pro-choice candidate running in the 88th Assembly District this November.

Defending Our Rights

By Nita M. Lowey

Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion has had the opportunity to celebrate many amazing accomplishments of women over the last 30 years.



Women have secured the right to safe and legal abortions. Women have defeated attempts to undermine the Title X family planning services program. Women have successfully

encouraged policy makers to increase funding for research on the long-term health impact of sexually transmitted diseases.

Many of these successes can be attributed to the rise of women in public service. Consider this: when WCLA was founded in 1972, only 15 women served in public office on Capitol Hill. Today a record number of 75 women are in Congress.

While we remain far from true equality of representation, we cannot underestimate the influence women have had in changing the very nature of Congress. Women bring a unique perspective and a different set of

experiences to the corridors of power where our national agenda is shaped.

For example, when I went to Congress in 1989, lawmakers ignored the wide gap in out-of-pocket health care costs for men and women — women's health care bills are 68% higher than men's. That is why I led the effort to require federal employees' health plans to cover the cost of prescription contraceptives, and am proud to continue the fight for coverage for all our families.

Like contraceptive coverage, many issues including quality education programs, retirement security, and safe access to health care services reach beyond women to affect the finances, well-being, and quality of life of American families.

One such issue challenging the women's community is bankruptcy reform legislation. In 1994, Congress passed FACE, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law, and it has been enormously successful in giving reproductive health clinics, their employees, and women who need services some measure of protection from harassment and intimidation. Unfortunately, some individuals and organizations found in violation of FACE and who must pay damages, are declaring bankruptcy and walking away from responsibility for their criminal acts.

FACE passed with broad bipartisan support because everyone agrees: violence and harassment have no place in our democratic ideals. Now, Republican congressional leaders are holding up final passage of a bankruptcy reform bill because it would hold FACE violators accountable for their actions.

Issues like protecting the right to choose and the people that provide reproductive health care demand our dedication to electing women and candidates committed to our ideals. While the journey to a 50-50 split in the U.S. Congress is a long one, we have brought women increasingly into the public policy fold. In turn, we have seen the national agenda evolve and better reflect the face of America.

As we enter this election season, I urge you to vote and elect those who share your core values.

Lest We Forget

When I was a teenager in about 1940, I baby-sat the two children of a lovely young divorced woman named Helen. She had few employable skills, an exhausting, poorly paid job and her ex-husband only occasionally made child-support payments. Suddenly she died...

The children came to live with me and my family for a few weeks while custody was sorted out. The six-year-old curled up in my arms and talking about their mother's death, he said, "Momma just bled and bled and we couldn't help her."

I was too young to guess what that might mean. Several years later my mother told me that Helen had died of a

botched abortion attempt. She impressed upon me what a sorrowful and serious choice an abortion would be, but that it should be safe and legal because sometimes it was the best alternative.

The children were raised by their father, a sweet but irresponsible alcoholic, and a series of stepmothers. The girl had a terrible, tumultuous adolescence, but after several children and a broken marriage, is a stable wonderful middle-aged woman. The boy was killed in a gambling accident.

I think society would have been much better served if Helen could have had a safe, legal abortion and raised her two children herself.

(from In Our Own Words... Collected recollections in honor of Roe v. Wade, Elizabeth Lake, ed.)

Finding Your Congressional District

By Phillip Chonigman
Partner—GeoPolitical Strategies

After the courts threatened to put in place its own Congressional Reapportionment plan in New York State, the Legislature finally negotiated a deal in late June and passed their own set of new district lines in time for this year's elections. It was not an easy task for us considering that New York once again lost two representatives from its congressional contingent – going from 31 to 29 seats in Congress due to lack of population growth – and needed to select which districts to cannibalize. While not a major problem for states in which a single political party controls everything, New York, with its split between Republican control of the Senate and Democratic control of the Assembly, maintained its tradition as being particularly tardy on reaching consensus on congressional redistricting.

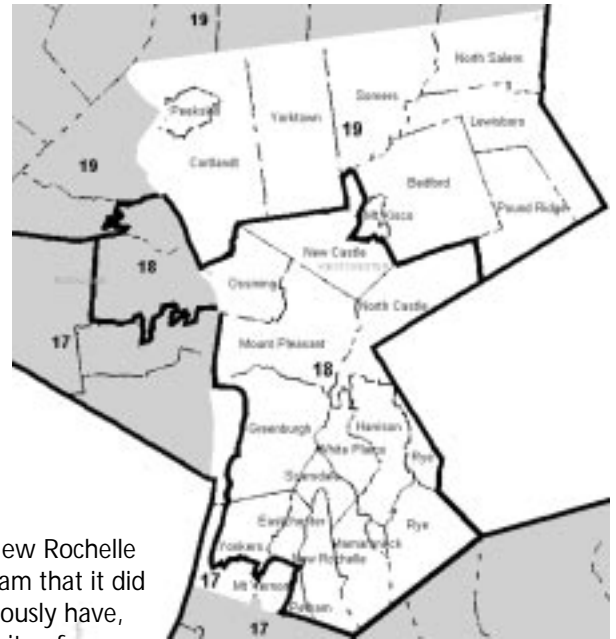
In the end, we were left with some major changes in our region as one of the eliminated districts was that of Congressman Ben Gilman, a senior Republican representative whose Catskills/Hudson Valley district included the Town of Greenburgh and all of Rockland County. That, in combination with the population increase in and around New York City, and the overall growth of each congressional district from an average population size of 580,348 to 654,361 - largely due to the reduction in the number of seats in NY - resulted in a large shift to the north for our local Representatives.

General thinking is that entrenched incumbents are most vulnerable immediately after a redistricting – particularly one in which they are forced into large areas of unfamiliar territory.

Here's a rundown of what they did to the Westchester Congressional delegation's districts:

- **District 17** previously took in a large strip across the northern section of the Bronx, along with parts of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, Pelham and New Rochelle. The new district lines represent a significant shift – reducing the Bronx portion of the district to under 45%, including the loss of Co-Op City as well as all areas in New Rochelle and Pelham, while gaining a narrow Hudson River corridor through Yonkers and Greenburgh's villages (largely along Route 9) to connect across the Tappan Zee with the towns of Orangetown, Ramapo and part of Clarkstown in Rockland County. It also picked up the balance of Mount Vernon that was not previously in the district and saw its Yonkers component increased and shifted around a bit. The Westchester portion is now about 25% of the district while Rockland represents around 30%. The current incumbent residing in the new District 17 is Democrat Eliot Engel.

- **District 18** used to wind its way from central Westchester through a snakelike corridor slicing into the boroughs of the Bronx and Queens. The new district loses all of its New York City population, instead moving north and west through Westchester and across the Hudson into Rockland. Westchester gains include those parts of White



Plains, New Rochelle and Pelham that it did not previously have, the majority of

Greenburgh (formerly a part of the dismantled Gilman district) and the towns of Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Castle and Ossining. In Rockland, it picked up portions of both Haverstraw and Clarkstown, which, combined, account for only about 10% of the new district with the balance all coming from Westchester. Outside of NYC its only losses were from that portion of Mount Vernon previously in the district and parts of Yonkers where the boundary lines shifted. The current incumbent residing in the new District 18 is Democrat Nita Lowey.

- **District 19** formerly running essentially north from White Plains to Poughkeepsie, with everything in between, it has now been squeezed from the top and bottom and runs west picking up 14 additional municipalities in Orange County – the heart of Gilman's old seat – the City of Beacon in Dutchess, plus the Rockland towns of Stony Point and a part of Haverstraw. Losses include White Plains, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Castle and Ossining in Westchester and the City of Poughkeepsie (but not the Town), plus the towns of Amenia, Union Vale and Washington in Dutchess County. All of Putnam remains in the district. The Westchester portion accounts for only about 25% of the new district. The current incumbent residing in the new District 19 is Republican Sue Kelly.

If you are interested in seeing what the Legislature did to the Congressional seats on a statewide basis, or if you simply want a bit more detail or additional information on the new Senate and Assembly lines, you can download both old and new maps, zooming in to whatever level you need, from the NYS Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR) website at <http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/>

For those who are still unsure which Congressional district you now find yourself in, you should contact your local municipal Clerk's office, the County Board of Elections, or, if you're a good map reader, the LATFOR website noted above.

You can expect more from me on this subject 9 years from now when the redistricting monster next rears its ugly head. Meanwhile, go out and make a difference!

**ACTION
ALERT!
ACTION
ALERT!**

**These elected officials represent you.
Contact them and let them know how
YOU want them to vote.**

Your Elected Officials: Keep For Future Reference

U.S. President

President George W. Bush [-] R
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500
Opinion phone: 202/456-1111
Fax 202/456-2461
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Senate

Hon. _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Switchboard: 202/224-3121

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton [+] D,L,W
202/224-4451
Senator@clinton.senate.gov

Hon. Charles E. Schumer [+] D,L,I
212/486-4430; 202/224-6542
Senator@schumer.senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives

Hon. _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Switchboard: 202/224-3121

CD 17 Eliot Engel [+] D,L
718/796-9700; 202/225-2464
www.house.gov/writerep

CD 18 Nita Lowey [+] D
914/428-1707; 202/225-6506
nita.lowey@mail.house.gov

CD 19 Sue Kelly [+/-] R,C
914/241-6340; 202/225-5441
dearsue@mail.house.gov

CD 20 Benjamin Gilman [+] R
845/343-6666; 202/225-3776
www.house.gov/gilman

Governor

Hon. George Pataki [-] R,C
Executive Chamber
State Capital
Albany, New York 12224
Phone: 518/474-8390
gov.pataki@chamber.state.ny.us

NYS Senate

Hon. _____
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247
Switchboard: 518/455-2800

SD 33 Ruth Hassell-Thompson [+] D
518/455-2061
hassellt@senate.state.ny.us

SD 34 Guy Velella [-] R,C, I ◇
718/792-7180; 518/455-3264
velella@senate.state.ny.us

SD 35 Nicholas Spano [+] R,C, I ◇
914/969-5194; 518/455-2231
spano@senate.state.ny.us

SD 36 Suzi Oppenheimer [+] D
914/934-5250; 518/455-2031
oppenhei@senate.state.ny.us

SD 37 Vincent Leibell [-] R,C,
845/279-3773; 518/455-3111
leibell@senate.state.ny.us

Majority Leader Joseph Bruno [-] R,C, I
518/455-3191
bruno@senate.state.ny.us

Health Committee Chair
Kemp Hannon [-] R,C, I
518/455-2200
hannon@senate.state.ny.us

NYS Assembly

Hon. _____
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248
Switchboard 518/455-4100

AD 84 Gary Pretlow [+] D, I
914/667-0127; 518/455-5291
pretloj@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 85 Ronald Tocci D, C [+/-]
914/235-7900; 518/455-4897
toccir@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 86 Richard Brodsky [+] D
914/345-0432; 518/455-5753
brodskr@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 87 Michael Spano [+] R,C, I
914/779-8805; 518/455-3662
spanom@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 88 Amy Paulin [+] D,W
914/723-1115; 518/455-5585
paulina@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 89 Naomi Matusow [-] D, I
914/241-2649; 518/455-5397
matusow@assembly.state.ny.us

AD 90 Sandra Galef [+] D, I
914/941-1111; 518/455-5348
galefs@assembly.state.ny.us

Speaker: Sheldon Silver [+] D, L
212/312-1420; 518/455-3791
speaker@assembly.state.ny.us
Health Committee Chair
Richard Gottfried [+] D, L, W
518/455-4941
gottfr@assembly.state.ny.us

County Executive

Andrew Spano [+] D, I, C, L, W
Michaelian Office Building
White Plains, New York 10601
Phone: 995-2900
ceo@westchestergov.com

Westchester Board of Legislators

Hon. _____
Michaelian Office Building
White Plains, New York 10601
Switchboard 995-2800

CBL 1 George Oros [-] R,C ◇
CBL 2 Ursula LaMotte [+] R,C, I
CBL 3 Suzanne Swanson [+] R,C
CBL 4 Michael Kaplowitz [+] D, I, W
CBL 5 William Ryan [+] D, I, W
CBL 6 Martin Rogowsky [+] D,I,W
CBL 7 George Latimer [+] D, W
CBL 8 Lois Bronz [+] D, W
CBL 9 Richard Wishnie [+] D, I, W
CBL 10 Vito Pinto [+] D, W
CBL 11 Jim Maisano [+] R, I, C, W
CBL 12 Thomas Abinanti [+] D, W
CBL 13 Clinton Young, Jr. [+] D
CBL 14 Bernice Spreckman [+] R,C,I, W
CBL 15 Louis Mosiello [+] R,C,I,W
CBL 16 Andrea Stewart-Cousins [+] D,W
CBL 17 Jose Alvarado [-] D, W

Key

+	Pro-choice	I	Independence
-	Anti-choice	L	Liberal
+/-	Mixed, qualified	RTL	Right to Life
D	Democrat	W	Working
R	Republican	◇	Has run on RTL
C	Conservative		

This list keeps improving because YOU elect pro-choice candidates.

*To write
letters to
the editor*

The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
Fax: 212/556-3622

e-mail: letters@nytimes.com

The Journal News
1 Gannett Drive
White Plains, NY 10604
Fax: 696-8396

e-mail: letters@thejournalnews.com

Weekly papers:
Check the mastheads
for addresses and fax
numbers.

Don't Turn Back the Clock

By Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton



The battle over a woman's right to choose remains one of the most contentious issues facing Congress. As we approach Election Day 2002, I want to emphasize the importance of electing pro-choice candidates to Congress. The margin between protecting a woman's right to choose and turning the clock back to the Dark Ages before Roe v. Wade is very slim.

In the House, there is a solid anti-choice majority that has banded together to ascribe rights to fetuses, to prevent women serving in the military from obtaining an abortion, and to keep funds from organizations that provide life-saving family planning services abroad. Just recently, we saw the Republican-controlled House of Representatives launch one of the most significant attacks ever on a woman's right to choose. The so-called "Abortion Non-Discrimination Act" would allow healthcare providers and insurance companies to refuse to provide or fund abortions without penalty. This legislation is just one example of the extreme measures that the Republican-controlled House will take unless we are able to increase the number of pro-choice members.

In the Senate, we have a slightly larger margin to protect Roe v. Wade, but the votes remain close. In late June, we achieved a major legislative victory in the Senate when the

members voted 52 to 40 to lift a ban on abortions at military facilities in the U.S. and overseas. However, the bill will not become law because the House will not pass it. The attempts to undermine Roe v. Wade will continue unless we are able to strengthen our pro-choice majority.

We cannot count on the President to veto legislation that will make it more difficult for women to access abortions. Since taking office President Bush has made it a priority to tear down a woman's right to choose. He reinstated the Global Gag Rule, which restricts NGOs (non-governmental organizations) receiving US aid from using their private funds to provide counseling, referral and abortion services to women, or even to lobby their own governments on a woman's right to choose. The President has also withheld \$34 million that Congress designated for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which provides life-saving reproductive health services to women around the globe. And just recently, President Bush issued an executive order that allows States to provide health care to a fetus by defining it as a child from conception, not birth. This is a furtive attempt to establish legal rights for a fetus and to lay the groundwork for legal action to abolish Roe.

It is critical that you join me on Nov. 5th in electing pro-choice candidates to Congress who do not waver in their support for a woman's right to choose. Working hard now will make our work easier later on.

Voting, from page 2

Voting is a generational thing. It tends to be tied less to economics and more to age. Older people vote; younger people don't. The younger someone is the less likely he or she is to vote, which is why social security is a frontline issue for both major political parties and childcare doesn't get mentioned. Seniors know that as much as money matters in an election, votes matter more. Seniors have remained our decision makers; they have the power; they vote.

A woman's right to choose is a constitutional right, but it doesn't mean people are able to exercise that right. In many states, more than 85% of the counties have no abortion providers, and the qualifiers placed on choice are so extensive that that right is meaningless.

I am an optimist because I believe that if I explain about choice and the need to vote, people will care, and if people care they will vote.

So in the words of The Riddler: Soccer moms, working women, men and women everywhere, "riddle me this" how do we get you to vote?



Don't lose the right to choose!

Look at it this way: if the Senate, now under Democratic control by one vote, goes Republican on November 5th, W will be free to hand lifetime appointments to appeals court nominees like his horrific Charles Pickering and Priscilla Owens. The Senate judiciary committee sent them packing because of their positions on issues, including abortion rights. It's clear that W is engaged in court-packing. One more Supreme Court justice in the mold of Poppy Bush's extreme conservative nominations of Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, much of what we care about, including Roe v. Wade, will be tossed in the civil liberties graveyard. And for political reasons, W wants to reassure the religious right bloc that he's still their guy. How's that for a nasty scenario?

The right's highest priority is getting rid of Roe v. Wade. Not content with draconian restrictions on access, the Bush Supreme Court majority will overturn Roe. Religion will be in our public schools and in our faces. Current protections for the environment will fall; expect the fume-spewing noisy monstrosities snowmobiles and their summer counterparts to have free rein to befoul our national parks, national forests, pristine lakes, marshes and beaches. Important habitat for birds, beasts, and plants will be destroyed as the court gives W's corporate pals the way to destroy greater areas of our national forests, parks, and wildlife refuges. We'll be powerless as the political religious right has its way with our land and our rights.

Another issue close to my heart is embryonic stem cell research. Unspecialized cells, grown in a laboratory, can be coaxed into becoming any of the body's cell types, such as bone, pancreas, liver, or nerves. To get such cells, scientists must destroy teeny human embryos; thus, the abortion issue intrudes.

Last summer, W announced that after long deep thinking (so he wants us to believe), he decided to permit federal funding only for existing cell lines. A year later, prominent scientists went before a Senate subcommittee to complain that these funding restrictions have held up research. The Times quoted Dr. Curt Civin, a Johns Hopkins researcher: "Embryonic stem cell research is crawling like a caterpillar." He said the cells are available "only to those persistent and patient enough to jump through a series of hoops and endure lengthy waits."

Nancy Reagan, a loyal Republican, is challenging W's limits to embryonic stem cell research. After a decade of watching her husband's mind slip away from Alzheimer's disease, she is rounding up friends and her old network to join her lobbying campaign to speed up the process. She has been visiting legislators and leaking information to the media. Now that she's gone public on her efforts, it'll be interesting to see how far she gets.

I've been working on and writing about embryonic stem cell research since I first heard of it, in 1998. By that time, my husband had been suffering from Alzheimer's for a couple of years. The spinal cord injury that disabled me occurred in January of last year. Successful spinal cord healing will take more years than I have. But during months of inpatient rehab, I met young people who might regain movement if stem cell transplants are ready for human application. My heart breaks

for these kids, whose names and stories stayed with me. C*** was a muscular college football player who became a paraplegic when a bullet hit him in the back. I saw him pummel his thighs, ordering them to "MOVE, DAMMIT, MOVE!"

Don't even think of not voting. And wave the voting guide merrily as you enter the polling place.

Bush Ideology Slows Science

The Bush administration's extremist ideology has forced stem cell research in the United States to move at an agonizingly slow pace. Usually, exciting new areas of medical research attract legions of young scientists. But not in this instance. Apparently, due to political controversy, anti-choice rhetoric, and the administration's vagaries concerning regulations and funding, no noticeable influx into this field of research has occurred.

The administration's intentional failure to define rules for funding and conditions for research has further exacerbated the situation. Grants submitted for approval wait in limbo as the government's inaction retards the approval process for federally funded research. While there may be as many as 78 stem cell lines eligible for federal funding, only three such lines have been made "readily available" and only five lines are "generally available" to academic researchers.

The glacial pace of research in the United States is in stark contrast to the progress being made in other parts of the world, such as Australia, Israel and England, where there are far fewer limitations and a more enlightened, less ideological, view of science in general and stem cell research in particular. Instead of leading the world in exploring perhaps the greatest and most exciting area of research of our time, the United States is sitting on the sidelines. The Bush team is investing in ideology not science; they are currying favor with anti-choice extremists rather than investing in the health and welfare of the people they were hired to protect.

Editorial from page 2

WCLA does not consider past endorsements to be grounds for future ones. If an elected official does not conduct him or herself as an advocate of choice, for example, by voting for anti-choice appointments to judicial posts or scholastic appointments, or supporting or sponsoring anti-choice legislation, WCLA will reevaluate that candidate in the next election cycle. On occasion, as redistricting occurs, an elected official's position on choice may become muddled, as s/he assesses the new district. That is not acceptable. WCLA is a tough taskmaster. We expect an elected official to represent the pro-choice position not just at election time but at every moment that he/she has the privilege of representing us. If not, WCLA will be there to pull the plug on that candidate.

Thanks, Naomi. Welcome, Adam.

On September 10th a hotly contested Democratic primary was held in the 89th Assembly District between incumbent Naomi Matusow and challenger Adam Bradley. When the dust settled, Bradley had won by a slim margin.

Throughout her tenure in Albany, Matusow won acclaim for her advocacy for women's rights. As a first-term Assemblywoman, she led the state budget fight to gain a large increase in funds for family planning. Her persever-

ance never flagged. Matusow has been relentless in her active role fighting for choice, which to her means "self-respect, health and freedom."

To Naomi, the pro-choice community says, "thank you and we hope you continue to be an active voice for reproductive rights."

To Adam Bradley who is pro-choice and the treasurer of WCLA-PAC, we say, "Welcome. You have a hard act to follow when it comes to choice. We need as many pro-choice advocates in Albany as possible."

WCLA Seeks Office Manager

WCLA needs an office manager/coordinator. This is an excellent job opportunity for the right person. The ideal candidate should be pro-choice, efficient, organized, careful with details, good with people, flexible and computer literate. The position involves heavy computer work as well as managing a small office, some secre-

tarial work, research, writing, book-keeping, and managing volunteers. It would be a plus to be interested in politics and familiar with Westchester's elected officials. Hours flexible.

To apply, send a letter and resume to WCLA, 237 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains, NY 10605, or e-mail to WCLA@WCLA.org. Please do not call.

An Updated Guide to the Spanos

- Andy Spano is Westchester County Executive.
- Andy's a Democrat.
- Leonard Spano is the Westchester County Clerk.
- Len's a Republican.
- Andy and Len aren't kin.
- Nick Spano is running for re-election to the NYS Senate.
- Mike Spano is running for re-election to the NYS Assembly.
- Nick and Mike are Republicans.
- Nick and Mike are Len's sons.
- Andy was chair of the county Democratic Party.
- Nick was chair of the county Republican Party.

WCLA's New Executive Director

Judith A. Kaufman has joined WCLA as its new executive director.

Kaufman has been a pro-choice activist since her college days and has been an outspoken advocate for the preservation of Roe v. Wade and against the constant assaults on a woman's right to full, affordable and unrestricted access to reproductive health services. In recent years, Kaufman has been heavily involved in the political campaigns of pro-choice candidates including Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Tony Castro.

Ms. Kaufman has been a practicing attorney for many years, most recently as a Law Guardian representing children in Westchester County Family and Supreme Courts. She also spent many years as an Administrative Law Judge for New York State and City agencies. Before these positions, Kaufman practiced public interest law and was the managing attorney of the Northern Westchester Legal Services office in Peekskill, New York.

Kaufman earned a B.A. from New York University and a J.D. from New York Law School.

Please return this coupon with your contribution to Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion.

I will help WCLA keep New York pro-choice.

Enclosed is my contribution to WCLA: \$35 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 Other \$_____

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Address _____ I will volunteer for WCLA. Send me a form.

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Political Party _____ Phone _____ I will do phoning.

I won't vote for candidates who would restrict abortion.

Checks are payable to WCLA. Mail with this coupon to 237 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains, NY 10605.

Contributions to WCLA are not tax deductible. To phone in a charge, please call (914) 946-5363.

Why it Matters Who is the Governor

BUDGET

- The governor and his staff prepare the budget—what gets funded and what doesn't
- The governor and his staff negotiate the final budget with the legislative leaders with little or no input or influence from our elected representatives
- The governor and his staff control how quickly or slowly funds are actually sent to programs

Under Gov. Pataki

- *NYS ranks 38th in the country in serving women in need of family planning and contraceptive services; and*
- *Only 37% of the more than one million women in need of services are getting them.*

That means there are thousands of unintended pregnancies in New York each year that could be prevented.

Again, as in his 2000 budget, Pataki has cut \$3 million in state money for family planning funding from his executive budget.

COMMISSIONERS

- The governor appoints all commissioners and their top staff. These appointees set their own budgets, draft bills and write

regulations which often have the force of law.

- Departments such as Health, Social Services and Insurance have jurisdiction over a multitude of topics such as health services, family planning clinics, Medicaid, adolescent pregnancy prevention programs, health insurance and HMOs.

• Gov. Pataki named anti-choice activist Rev. John Bonnici to the City University of New York (CUNY) Board of Trustees. Bonnici's only credential for the job seems to be as a vocal opponent of abortion, contraception and gay rights. He has no prior experience with higher education. Since 1996 Bonnici has headed the Archdiocese of New York's Family Life/Respect Life Office. According to Anthony DeStefano, Executive Director of Priests for Life, Bonnici's office is "one of the largest, busiest, and most successful diocesan pro-life [sic] offices in the world."

• Gov. Pataki named Dr. Antonia Novello, an abortion opponent, to be health commissioner.

• Gov. Pataki permitted the diocese-run Medicaid-only HMO Fidelis Health Care to buy another Medicaid-only HMO and absorb its 20,000 low-income clients. Roman Catholic Fidelis does not offer family planning, sterilization, or abortion.

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

- The governor appoints some judges to the state courts that decide many major cases involving reproductive rights and health care.

• Gov. Pataki named Albert Emanuelli to the Court of Claims. Emanuelli had been the incumbent Surrogate who took the RTL Party line and then lost to WCLA endorsed candidate Anthony Scarpino.

ADVISORY BOARDS

- The governor makes appointments to advisory and oversight boards which are very influential in making and implementing state policies.

• Gov. Pataki hired David Armor, paying him \$250,000, to testify in the appeal of Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Leland DeGrasse's finding that the statewide funding formula discriminates against NY City schools. In the past, Armor had made such a name for himself crusading against desegregation that David Duke, the former National Director of the Knights of the KKK, featured him in his book "Forced Justice" and praised Armor for his "meticulous" probe of "the pernicious effects" of desegregation.

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Westchester Coalition
for Legal Abortion, Inc.
237 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains NY 10605

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