

PROChoice

WCLA-PAC, ProChoice Voter



2008 VOTING GUIDE

**VOTE Tuesday,
NOV. 4, 2008**

- ☆ Tear off this yellow Voting Guide.
- ☆ Save it until Election Day.
- ☆ Carry it openly into the voting booth.

**YOU CAN CARRY THIS GUIDE INTO THE VOTING BOOTH
DON'T LET ANYONE STOP YOU!**

Under Election Law Title I, Polling Places, Section 8-104

you are permitted to bring this guide in with you.

If anyone questions you, tell that person to call the Westchester Board of Elections (914-995-5700) and to ask to speak with the Democratic Deputy Commissioner. **GET THE PERSON'S NAME WHO CHALLENGED YOU.**

We will report the person!

★ *Use the
right to vote
to protect the
right to choose*



**Our endorsed candidates are listed in
BLUE BOXES
VOTE ONLY FOR THEM**

FREEDOM OF CHOICE – VOTE FOR IT!

Please copy and distribute this page to other pro-choice Westchester County Voters.

2008 PROChoice Voting Guide

WCLA-PAC and ProChoice Voter

Our endorsed candidates are highlighted in boxes. Help keep abortion legal and accessible. Vote for endorsed candidates.

WCLA - Choice Matters Endorsement Policy, 2008
WCLA - Choice Matters' endorsements are made by its Board of Directors.
WCLA - Choice Matters' endorsements are determined case by case. To be considered for endorsement, candidates must complete and return WCLA - Choice Matters' questionnaire and participate in an interview if requested.
Incumbents may be endorsed over pro-choice challengers if they have consistent voting records and have established a reputation for strong leadership and extra effort in advancing access to abortion and contraception. Non-incumbents may be endorsed if they have demonstrated leadership in the community on the issue.
Endorsement is considered only for those who unequivocally support:
• access to abortion and contraception for all women, unimpeded by laws, restrictions, or regulation;
• strict confidentiality for all reproductive health care;
• coverage by public and private insurance of abortion and contraception.
Judicial candidates: To be eligible for endorsement, judicial candidates must participate in an interview if requested by WCLA - Choice Matters, and neither seek nor accept the Right to Life Party nomination.

U.S. PRESIDENT/ VICE PRESIDENT

Barack Obama/Joe Biden (D,W)

John McCain/Sarah Palin ¥ (R,I,C)

Roger Calero/Alyson Kennedy§ (SWP)

GLORIA LA RIVA/EUGENE PURYEAR (PSL)

Cynthia McKinney/Rosa Clemente§ (GRN)

Bob Barr/Wayne A. Root (LBT)

Ralph Nader/Matt Gonzales§ (PLT)

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

• District 17

Westchester County: Mt. Vernon, Parts Of Greenburgh, Yonkers And The Bronx; Rockland County: Orangetown, Ramapo And Part Of Clarkstown

ELIOT ENGEL* (D,I,W)

Robert Goodman (R,C)

• District 18

Westchester County: Pelham, Eastchester, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Rye (town & city), Harrison, Scarsdale, White Plains, Mt. Pleasant, No. Castle, Ossining, New Castle, and parts of Greenburgh and Yonkers; Rockland County: parts of Haverstraw and Clarkstown.

NITA LOWEY* (D,W)

Jim Russell (R,C)

• District 19

Westchester County: Peekskill, Yorktown, Cortlandt, Somers, No. Salem, Bedford, Pound Ridge, Lewisboro, and Mt. Kisco; Putnam County: parts of Orange, Dutchess, and Rockland counties.

JOHN HALL* (D,I,W)

Kieran Michael Lalor¥ (R,C)

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

• District 34

Eastchester, Parts of Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Pelham, New Rochelle, and the Bronx.

JEFFREY D. KLEIN* (D,I,W)

Daniel Fasolino (R,C)

• District 35

Towns of Greenburgh and Mt. Pleasant, most of Yonkers.

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS* (D,W)

John M. Murtagh (R,I,C)

• District 36

Parts of Mt. Vernon and the Bronx.

RUTH HASSEL-THOMPSON* (D,W)

Curtis Brooks (R,C)

• District 37

Harrison, Mamaroneck, New Castle, No. Castle, Ossining, Rye Town, Scarsdale, parts of New Rochelle, Rye, and White Plains.

SUZI OPPENHEIMER* (D,W)

Liz Feld (R,I,C)

• District 40

Northern Westchester, Putnam County, part of Dutchess County.

Vincent Leibell, III* (R,I,C)

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

• District 87

Mt. Vernon, part of Yonkers

J. GARY PRETLOW* (D,I)

Ralph Pearson (C)

Ernesto Darko Boaten (W)

• District 88

Eastchester, Pelham, Scarsdale, part of White Plains and New Rochelle

AMY R. PAULIN* (D,I,W)

Anthony Pilla (R,C)

• District 89

Northern Westchester, Harrison, most of White Plains

ADAM BRADLEY* (D,I,W)

• District 90

Cortlandt, Ossining, Peekskill, Kent, Phillipstown, Putnam Valley

SANDRA GALEF* (D,I)

William J. Gouldman (R,C)

Richard F. Quaglietta (W)

• District 91

Mamaroneck, Rye Town, Rye, part of New Rochelle

GEORGE S. LATIMER* (D,I,W)

Rob Biagi (R,C)

• District 92

Greenburgh, Mt. Pleasant, part of Yonkers

RICHARD BRODSKY* (D,W)

• District 93

Most of Yonkers

MICHAEL SPANO* (D,C,W)

James Faulkner¥ (R,I)

• District 99

Yorktown, No. Salem, Somers, part of Dutchess and Putnam

Greg Ball* (R,I,C)

JOHN A. DEGNAN (D,W)

COUNTY COURT

(vote for one)

SUSAN M. CAPECI (D,W)

Raymond W. Belair¥ (RTL)

Parties: D: Democrat

R: Republican

I: Independence

C: Conservative

W: Working Families

RTL: Right to Life

SWP: Socialist Workers Party

PSL: Party for Socialism and Liberation

GRN: Green Party

LBT: Libertarian Party

PLT: Populist Party

Key to ratings:

ENDORSED

PRO-CHOICE, NOT ENDORSED

Anti-choice * Incumbent

§ Not able to contact

¥ Endorsed by the Right to Life

Committee

® Formerly endorsed by the RTL PAC

What's at Stake on Nov. 4? EVERYTHING!

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of Election 2008. With the presidential choice between Barack Obama and John McCain, and the election of the entire House and one-third of the Senate up for grabs, voters will be deciding the fate of this country for years to come. Women cannot

afford a continuation of the Bush administration's extremist ideology — and given his voting record, that is exactly what McCain will give us if elected president. Choice Matters has made its position clear. We are endorsing Barack Obama, and actively opposing John McCain.

At the end of the day, we know that it is not Choice Matters, the NRA, the DNC or the RNC who will decide the fate of our country. It will be you, the voter or the non-voter.

Remember, every time a person decides not to vote, those who vote have more power.



PROChoice

Newsletter of

WCLA - Choice Matters, Inc.,
WCLA-PAC, ProChoice Voter

Vol. 37, No. 1 Autumn, 2008

Obama/Biden Yes! ~~Bush/Cheney~~, McCain/Palin No! Choice Matters endorses the Obama/Biden Ticket!

Obama is committed to protecting *Roe v. Wade*, to supporting women's reproductive rights, and to promoting stem cell research. Obama supports legislation to increase access for family-planning services, to provide teens with comprehensive sex education, and to prevent pharmacies from denying women access to their birth-control prescriptions.

Senator Obama has clearly stated, "A woman's ability to decide how many children to have and when, without interference from the government, is one of the most fundamental rights we possess. It is not just an issue of choice, but equality and opportunity for all



women." (Huffington Post, 5/14/08)

At a time when teen pregnancies are on the rise, health care costs including birth control are skyrocketing, and women are being denied their equal rights in the workplace, the American people need a president who is not afraid to legislate change when need be. Obama is that person.

Joe Biden's Record

Biden is and always has been a strong supporter of women's reproductive rights. In debates, through his voting record, and most recently on *Meet the Press* with Tom Brokaw, Biden

[See Obama on page 3](#)

Remember: Elections Have Consequences

"Elections have consequences. One of the consequences is the president of the United States gets to name his or her nominees to the bench," (McCain, 7/08)

The inherent truth of that statement should frighten every pro-choice voter. Justice John Paul Stevens just turned 88 on April 20, and on January 20, 2009—when the next president is sworn into office—five others of the nine Supreme Court justices will be over 70. Whoever is elected president will likely replace most of them, especially

if he is re-elected. Regardless of who is elected in 2012, he or she would not be able to undo the damages a McCain presidency would reap.

Remember McCain is anti-choice, anti-fair pay legislation, and anti-individual rights. He opposes legislation that mandates basic civil rights.

The Supreme Court Composition Today

Conservatives

- 72-Antonin Scalia
- 60-Clarence Thomas
- 58-Samuel Alito
- 53-John Roberts (Chief Justice)

Progressives

- 88-John Paul Stevens
- 75-Ruth Bader Ginsburg
- 70-Stephen Breyer
- 68-David Souter

Conservative swing vote
72-Anthony Kennedy

It's the Issues

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett
President/Chair of the Board

One of the comments most frequently heard in door-to-door election canvassing is, "Vote for who? I don't know... there's just something about her/him..." Sometimes that is good, but more often than not it's bad. The person often adds, "S/he's so..." and any number of words might follow: schoolteacher-y, cold, ambitious, arrogant, shrill.



The temptation is to scream, "WHO CARES?? You're voting for the person to run the country, not inviting her/him to dinner!" The last time this country voted for the person they'd most like to have a beer with, we ended up with eight years of George W. Bush and all of the horrors that have gone with that.

Why is it that when Americans hire a surgeon or a mechanic we focus on the job to be done, but when voting for president we focus on whether she or he is nice—a regular gal or guy?

It's the issues! It's the issues! It's the issues!

I was and am a Hillary supporter. If she were running today, I'd be voting for her and working to convince you to do the same. Because of the issues. Yes, it's great that she is a woman but that alone would not have earned her this organization's endorsement nor my personal support. She is more than her gender—she is her brain, her actions, and her track record!

Choice Matters endorsed Hillary because she is the foremost leader on women's reproductive health in Congress (the only possibly challenge for that designation

coming from Nita Lowey!). But Hillary won't be on the ballot this November.

Instead, we are faced with a choice between two men who could not be more different—one, John McCain, who is in lockstep with President Bush and has promised a continuation of every aspect of Bush's anti-woman anti-choice agenda; the other, Barack Obama, who is in agreement with Hillary on every aspect of women's reproductive rights, and most every other issue. Obama believes *Roe v. Wade* was correctly decided while McCain not only wants to overturn *Roe*, he supports a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

McCain who opposes abortion has a 100% *anti-birth control* voting record. As he is not yet in a position to redefine contraceptives as abortion, which is indeed the goal of anti-choice extremists as shown by Colorado Amendment 48, McCain has had to settle for making birth control increasingly difficult to obtain. He has opposed any legislation that would enable women to more easily afford it. This is Birth Control—the very thing that since the 1960s has helped women gain control of their lives. Enabling women to control their fertility has proven key to controlling everything else—education, employment, economic independence, leaving abusive relationships—EVERYTHING...and McCain opposes it. At least he was consistent when he opposed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act too. Apparently, economic independence and parity for women are not high on McCain's agenda.

In stark contrast, Obama is committed to parity—a commitment that includes fighting for equal pay, protecting *Roe*, making reproductive healthcare available to all regardless of ability to pay, and much more. Like Hillary, Obama has made a career of fighting for those who cannot fight for themselves.

As candidates, Clinton and Obama generated an intensity and commitment from their supporters not seen in years. Allegiances were established for a multitude of reasons, some that can be explained and others that cannot. For some, it was like a passionate love affair. Some are finding it very hard to move on.

In my process of moving on, I have looked for the good that came out of this very heated primary season, and there is definitely a huge "good" to be found. We have a new women's movement, which is something many of us thought could never happen again.

As Rosa Parks has been recognized as "the spark" for the civil rights movement, Hillary Clinton is the spark that ignited this 21st century women's movement. Women have found their voice again. I am working together with others to establish an organization that

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ProChoice Voter

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See Focus on back page

Editorials

The Kindness of Strangers

John McCain's favorite female literary character must be Blanch DuBois in Tennessee Williams' *A Street Car Named Desire* as she epitomizes his entire economic plan for women.

McCain does not believe in legislation to protect women's rights. Instead, as his record shows, he asks all women to live by the same life philosophy as broken, insecure, penniless, raped Blanch DuBois, who explained, "I have always relied on the kindness of strangers" to get by.

McCain claims to favor pay equity but opposed the *Ledbetter Fair Pay Act* as recently as April 2008. Although he skipped the Fair Pay Act vote, he spoke out against it. According to McCain, "[women] need the education and training..." but apparently not legal protection against pay discrimination. In 2000, McCain also opposed an amendment aimed at providing "more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex." In 1985, McCain voted against a study to investigate pay differences among federal employees and determine whether they were the result of discrimination.

According to a campaign aide, McCain claims to oppose all legislative mandates. (Wonder what McCain thinks of mandates like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Voting Rights Act of 1965 or the Nineteenth Amendment?)

McCain also opposes legislation requiring insurance plans that cover Viagra to also cover contraceptives. Enabling men to have sex but not helping women to protect against pregnancy must be a mandate issue for McCain.

In 2003 and 2005, McCain voted against measures that would have required insurance companies to cover birth control. McCain voted to reduce, eliminate or restrict health insurance programs for low-income children and pregnant women, a minimum of six times. In August 2007, McCain again voted against expanding coverage of SCHIP (the federal government State Children's Health Insurance Program.).

Viagra, no birth control, more children, no insurance...must be a mandate thing.

In 2000, McCain voted against providing tax credits to small businesses that offer health insurance to their employees—women represent the largest growing sector of small business owners. He voted against a \$3,000 tax credit to help seniors and their families cover long-term care—women statistically outlive their spouses and are the caregivers.

Twice McCain voted against measures that provided additional funding for home and community-based healthcare providers—a profession dominated by women; 18 times McCain voted to cut or restrict Medicare, and seven times to cut or restrict funding for Medicaid—poverty rates are highest for families headed by single women, and the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to the number of men over the past decade.

A spokesperson for McCain has said he will have the most women appointees of any president to date if he is elected—which is great, but...McCain does not believe in quotas so he won't be "man-dating" parity for business or government.

McCain's refusal to legislate forces American women to—quite literally—rely on the kindness of strangers. Without legislation, there are no guarantees, and McCain must know that.

Obama from page 1

has stated his unequivocal support for *Roe v. Wade*. He is committed to comprehensive sex education and is a co-sponsor of the Prevention First Act. He has voted to expand access to preventive health care services that reduce both unintended pregnancy and the number of abortions, and to improve access to women's health care. Biden championed the Violence Against Women Act, calling it "the most significant legislation" he has crafted in his thirty-five years in the Senate. Each time the Act has been renewed, Biden successfully added initiatives, in 2000 on human trafficking and in 2005 on domestic violence in public housing.

The Future

The American people cannot afford four more years of right-wing extremist Bush policies repackaged under the McCain seal. Any doubts regarding McCain's or should one say McBush's agenda were blown away with his selection of anti-choice zealot Sarah Palin (page 5) as his running mate. John McCain's record (page 4) is a mirror image of the Bush policies. McCain is no maverick but instead a plow horse (or tow truck?) committed to dragging the Bush agenda over the finish line.

Paid for by ProChoice Voter

John McCain's Record: Look Before You Leap — Know the Facts

John McCain's record on women's issues is frightening. He is no maverick but instead an ultra-conservative who is in lockstep with his party's religious extremists. His actions, votes, and statements show McCain to be an elitist whose policies repeatedly target the most vulnerable—the poor, who in most cases are women and children.

For example, McCain trumpeted his anti-choice ideology when he voted to change the definition of those eligible for SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) to include the "unborn" [sic] while at the same time voting at least six times *against* expanding coverage to low-income children and pregnant women. (McCain's focus appears to be on fetuses, not living breathing children!)

Family Planning

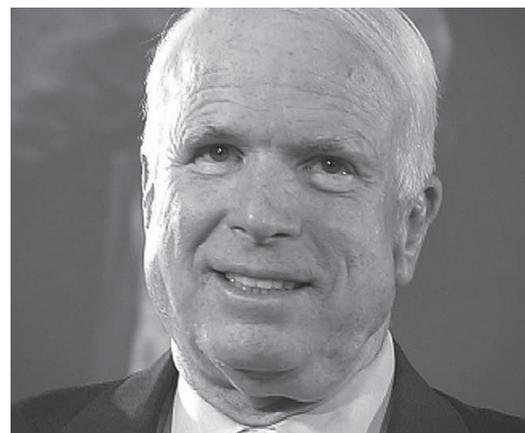
Birth control and family planning are key components in economic independence for women. McCain is not only anti-choice, he is anti-family planning and anti-woman's independence. Only the wealthy can afford to ignore McCain's actions, a smattering of which are listed below:

- Voted to end "the Title X family planning program, which is credited with helping prevent over 9 million abortions" by making comprehensive voluntary family planning services readily available to all who desire such services. (Feministing.com) *Title X was established by Congress in 1970. Of the approximately 4.5 million people serviced each year at Title X-funded clinics, the vast majority are women, and 60% are less than 25 years of age. Nearly two-thirds of Title X clients come from households with incomes below the poverty level.* (Center for Reproductive Rights, 9/8/08)
- Voted for the domestic gag rule, which would have prohibited federally funded family-planning clinics from providing women with access to full information about their reproductive-health options.
- Rejected efforts to reduce the need for abortion and improve maternal health, by opposing efforts to require insurance coverage for prescription birth control, improve access to emergency contraception, and provide more women with prenatal health care.
- Voted against legislation reducing the number of unintended pregnancies by investing in insurance coverage for prescription birth control, advancing family-planning services, instituting teen-pregnancy-prevention programs, and developing programs to increase awareness about emergency contraception.
- Voted to required parental consent for teenagers who want to obtain birth control.

Education

- Voted against funding teen-pregnancy-prevention programs. *Fact: Women who have a child while in high*

school are less likely to finish high school and their children are more likely to grow up in poverty and to become teen mothers themselves.



- Opposed legislation requiring abstinence-only programs to be medically accurate and scientifically based.
- Voted against an amendment that would have allocated \$100 million for the prevention of teen pregnancy by providing education and contraception.
- Voted to take \$75 million away from the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant in order to establish an "abstinence-only" program that requires the removal of information about birth control.
- Voted to designate one-third of all HIV/AIDS prevention funds for "abstinence-unless-married" programs.

Abortion

- Voted in support of the first-ever nationwide ban on a medically safe and necessary abortion procedure—a ban that contains no exception for the health of a woman.
- Repeatedly voted to deny low-income women access to abortion services except in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment.
- Voted to make it a federal crime for anyone other than a parent—including grandparents and religious leaders—to accompany a minor across state lines for an abortion if the home state notification and/or consent laws have not been met.
- Voted to fine and/or imprison doctors who perform abortions on out-of-state minors if the minor's home state notification and/or consent laws have not been met.
- Voted to make it a crime to harm or kill a fetus while committing a violent crime, thereby making the fetus a person in the eyes of the law with potentially the same legal standing as the pregnant woman. *The pro-choice community has proposed making injury of a pregnant woman a greater offence while leaving a fetus as a fetus.*

See McCain on next page

Palin from page 5

- Governor Palin broke her campaign promise to make domestic violence a top issue, even while knowing that Alaska's per-capita rate of women killed by men is the highest in the nation and that the sexual assault rates against children are six times the national average. According to public safety experts, the prevalence of rape and sexual assault of minors makes Alaska's record one of the worst in the nation. (*Examining Palin's Record on Violence Against Women*, Brentin Mock, 9/18/08; *Critics Question Palin's Record on "Epidemic" Rape, Domestic Violence in Alaska*, Justin Root, 9/15/08)

Peggy Brown, executive director of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault which is an umbrella organization for shelters and anti-violence programs around the state, explained, "[Palin has] really done a lot of work on oil and gas, but when it comes to violence against women and children...we haven't been on her radar as a priority."

Department of Public Safety officials were devising a hard-hitting initiative focused on sexual violence in Alaska, but Palin pulled the plug on it last July.

It wasn't the money. As both mayor and governor Palin lobbied for earmarks, and never said, "Thanks but no thanks!" As mayor she hired a lobbying firm to get \$27 million in earmarks, and in her one and a half years as governor she has made the largest per-capita request in the nation—nearly \$750 million in federal funds. She also grew Wasilla's long-term debt from \$1 million to \$25 million, \$16 million of which was spent to build a sports complex. If she did not want to spend state dollars, Palin could have accessed funds made available through the Violence Against Women Act that Democratic VP candidate Senator Joe Biden successfully championed. **Her priorities have cost women their lives!**

Palin Ideology

- Opposes abortion even in cases of rape and incest, even if the victims are children.
- Supports a constitutional amendment banning abortion, because overturning *Roe* would not be enough for her.
- Supports abstinence-only education, in spite of the fact that nearly two-thirds of all teens will have had sex by the end of their senior year in high school.
- Believes life begins at conception (see back cover for potential impact of Palin's view).
- Supports the teaching of creationism in public schools. *Religion is a theme that runs throughout all of Palin's policies and positions. She has called the war in Iraq "a task that is from God," and said, "...there is a plan and that plan is God's plan." She has asked for religious intervention for a \$30 billion national gas pipeline project when she said, "I think God's will has to be*

done in unifying people and companies to get that gas line built, so pray for that."

Paid for by ProChoice Voter

Bush Administration's Parting Gift

By Ronnie Pawelko

Working to ensure its anti-choice legacy, the Bush administration has proposed HHS regulations that could dramatically expand the legal right of health care providers—both institutions and individuals—to **refuse** to provide patients with services, information, and referrals specifically regarding health care. The first draft of the measure defined contraception as abortion. The present version does not equate contraception with abortion, but it leaves open that possibility by failing to define key terms, including the words *discrimination* and *abortion*.

The proposed rule could interfere with the enforcement of a myriad of health laws enacted to protect women, including laws that require health care providers to treat patients in need of emergency care. The rule could have a devastating impact on New York State. Although New York has been at the forefront of efforts to protect women's access to contraception, the proposed regulation could jeopardize its ability to enforce laws such as requiring Emergency Contraception to be offered to sexual assault survivors in the Emergency Room and legislation requiring contraceptive equity.

Federal and state law has traditionally balanced protections for individuals' religious beliefs with patients' need to access health care services. The proposed regulation seems designed to upset that careful balance and place the religious beliefs of medical institutions and professionals above the medical needs of patients. The final regulations may be issued as soon as late October.

"It is important to remember that *Roe v. Wade* did not mean that abortions could be performed. They have always been done, dating from ancient Greek days.

"What *Roe* said was that ending a pregnancy could be carried out by medical personnel, in a medically accepted setting, thus conferring on women, finally, the full rights of first-class citizens — and freeing their doctors to treat them as such."

Waldo L. Fielding, M.D.

**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,C
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
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Opinion phone: 202/456-1111
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U.S. Senate

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U.S. House of Representatives

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CD 19 John Hall [+] D
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www.johnhall.house.gov

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AD 99 Greg Ball [-] R,C, I
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ballg@assembly.state.ny.us

Speaker: Sheldon Silver [+] D, W
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speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

Health Committee Chair
Richard Gottfried [+] D, W
518/455-4941
gottfrr@assembly.state.ny.us

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Phone: 995-2900
ceo@westchestergov.com

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Switchboard 995-2800

CBL 1 George Oros [-] R,C, I ◇

CBL 2 Peter Harckham [+] D, W

CBL 3 John Nonna [+] D,I,W

CBL 4 Michael Kaplowitz [+] D, I, W

CBL 5 William Ryan [+] D, I, W

CBL 6 Martin Rogowsky [-] D,I,W

CBL 7 Judy Myers [+] D, I, W

CBL 8 Lois Bronz [+] D, W

CBL 9 William Burton [+] D, I, W

CBL 10 Vito Pinto [+] D, I, W

CBL 11 Jim Maisano [+] R,C,I, W

CBL 12 Thomas Abinanti [+] D,I, W

CBL 13 Lyndon D. Williams [-] D

CBL 14 Bernice Spreckman [+] R,C,I, W

CBL 15 Gordon Burrows [-] R, C

CBL 16 Ken Jenkins [+] D

CBL 17 Jose Alvarado [+] D

Key

+ Pro-choice
- Anti-choice
D Democrat
R Republican
C Conservative

I Independence
RTL Right to Life
W Working Families
◇ Has run on RTL

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

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letters to
the editor

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Nightmares of Today – Even With Roe 'Girl, 12, Gets Kansas Abortion'

Headline and excerpts from The Detroit Free Press, 7/31/98
A 12-year-old Sterling Heights, MI girl whose quest to terminate her pregnancy became a national concern has obtained a late-term abortion at a women's clinic in Wichita, Kan., a lawyer for her family confirmed Thursday.

The girl's case hit the national spotlight July 17 when Macomb County Probate Judge Pamela Gilbert O'Sullivan made the girl a ward of the court until a psychiatric examination was performed.

The judge prohibited the girl from leaving the state, blocking her parents' efforts to take her to Kansas for a late-term abortion. On July 24, Gilbert O'Sullivan lifted the travel ban and returned custody of the girl to her parents.

The girl's 17-year-old brother is suspected of impregnating her 29 weeks ago. Police said he raped the girl during the day in the family's two-bedroom apartment while the parents were at work. The parents, college-educated in India, speak little English and work in a factory.

For the last two weeks, lawyers for the girl's family and Michigan Right to Life have been deluged with offers of money for the girl to carry the pregnancy to term.

The Catholic Charities collected about \$7,000 for a scholarship to give to the girl if she didn't have an abortion. There were also offers of adoption. And two lawyers filed a petition to try to represent the fetus, but the court never accepted the formal request.

American Civil Liberties Union attorneys produced affidavits from two doctors who said that if the girl were forced to carry the fetus to term, she could suffer irreparable physical and psychological damage.

The girl's condition was diagnosed July 6, when a doctor determined she was 27 weeks pregnant. The doctor referred her to Hutzel Hospital, where abortions are performed up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. Doctors there referred her to the Women's Health Care Services in Wichita, the nearest known place she could obtain a late-term abortion.

However, the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office intervened, and essentially delayed the procedure for nearly two weeks.

Lest We Forget...

|| The familiar symbol of illegal abortion is the infamous "coat hanger" — which may be the symbol, but is in no way a myth. In my years in New York, several women arrived with a hanger still in place. Whoever put it in — perhaps the patient herself — found it trapped in the cervix and could not remove it."

"We did not have ultrasound, CT scans or any of the now accepted radiology techniques. The woman was placed under anesthesia, and as we removed the metal piece we held our breath, because we could not tell whether the hanger had gone through the uterus into the abdominal cavity..."

"However, not simply coat hangers were used." "Almost any implement you can imagine had been and was used to start an abortion — darning needles, crochet hooks, cut-glass salt shakers, soda bottles, sometimes intact, sometimes with the top broken off."

"Another method...was a soap solution forced through the cervical canal with a syringe. This could cause almost immediate death if a bubble in the solution entered a blood vessel and was transported to the heart."

Excerpts from *Repairing the Damage, Before Roe*, for *The New York Times*, 6/3/08, by Waldo L. Fielding, M.D., a retired gynecologist who received his formal training in New York from 1948 to 1953.

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Colorado: Redefining Personhood

For the first time in US history the public will decide when personhood begins when they vote on Colorado Amendment 48. The potential ramifications are detailed by Diana Hsieh and Ari Armstrong of the Coalition for Secular Government who have published *Amendment 48 is Anti-Life: Why It Matters That a Fertilized Egg Is Not a Person*, and by Lynn Paltrow of National Advocates for Pregnant Women (NAPW) in an open letter to candidate Sarah Palin.

Women Be Damned—It's the Egg!

"[Amendment 48] which would define a fertilized egg as a person with full legal rights in the Colorado constitution, is profoundly anti-life," said Coalition founder Diana Hsieh. "It would obliterate basic reproductive rights in Colorado based solely on the faith-based fiction that a fertilized egg is the moral equal of a born infant."

- Given existing criminal statutes, Amendment 48 would subject women and their doctors to life in prison or the death penalty for abortions, even in cases of rape, incest, and fetal deformity.
- It would prevent doctors from properly treating non-viable ectopic pregnancy until the woman's life and health was in serious danger, thereby causing needless deaths.
- It would force thousands of women each year to bear unwanted children, whatever the cost to their own lives and happiness.
- The measure would ban popular and effective forms of birth control, including the birth-control pill, thereby increasing unwanted pregnancies.
- It would outlaw the fertility treatments responsible for the birth of hundreds of Colorado babies to eager parents each year.

(Media Release, 8/20/08, For more information go to: <http://www.seculargovernment.us>)

Trying to Educate the VP Candidate

In a powerful open letter, NAPW Executive Director Lynn Paltrow writes of the devastating impact Palin's position—that fetuses have a right to life—already has on pregnant women, and what would happen if it were established as law. Paltrow cites true stories of pregnant women being tied down, incarcerated, forced to have C-sections, and more because some other person decided they were not acting in the best interest of the fetus, and that fetal rights outweighed their rights—and these were women who wanted to give birth.

Paltrow explains that, "millions of American women work part time or for small employers who are not covered by the PDA [Pregnancy Discrimination Act]. If your [Palin's] political position on abortion is accepted—all of these women could be forced to give up their jobs because an employer, family member, or state agent believed it necessary to ensure the health and rights of their unborn child." To read the entire letter go to: <http://www.alternet.org/story/97457>.

From page 2

will endorse and support candidates who vote on legislation in accordance with our platform which will be composed of five elements key to women: 1. Health care; 2. Employment; 3. Education; 4. Domestic violence; and 5. Senior/childcare. (One might say, the candidate who H.E.E.D.S. women's needs will receive our endorsement.)

Before we can look ahead though, we must deal with Nov. 4th. Remember, Obama's issues are Hillary's issues. I hope they are yours.

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