



# PROChoice

Newsletter of  
Choice Matters, Inc.,  
WCLA-PAC  
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## Reproductive Rights: ABSOLUTELY A County Issue

The County is the primary health services provider in Westchester County and directly affects:  
**\*Budget issues:** The departments that relate to women and families comprise a large portion of the County budget.  
**\*County Medical Center:** The County Board of Legislators (CBL) confirms appointments to the hospital board and in turn ultimately controls whether the hospital will continue to provide abortions. The CBL enters into contracts with the Medical Center to provide services to County jail inmates.  
**\*County Health Department:** The County decides which clinics will provide services and whether they will provide reproductive health services, counseling, and referral for abortions.  
**\*Department of Social Services (DSS):** It administers the system by which pregnant women can get fast-track Medicaid eligibility for pregnancy-related conditions, including abortion. The CBL oversees DSS to ensure that a full range of reproductive services are provided by HMOs to those who are eligible

for DSS assistance.  
**\*County Jail:** The CBL decides whether inmates will get pregnancy tests, abortions, and prenatal care on request and without delay.  
**\*Commissioners:** The County Executive appoints, and County legislators vote to confirm, commissioners. Commissioners important to the pro-choice issue are Health, Social Services, and Corrections.  
**\*Citizen Information Service:** The County decides whether it will include referrals for clients for family planning and abortions.  
**\*Office for Women:** The County Executive and the CBL determine the budget and the number of positions in an office that provides a wide range of services and information for women.  
**\*Women's Advisory Board:** The County Executive and the CBL determine the make-up of the Women's Advisory Board.  
**\*Legislation on other levels of government:** The County lobbies on state and federal issues that relate to reproductive health care. The CBL votes on resolutions supporting or opposing legislation at higher levels of government.

### Endorsements:

#### Choice Matters Endorses Andy Spano for County Executive/Opponent Rob Astorino Endorsed by the Right to Life Party\*

In its first yellow voting guide in 1972, Choice Matters (then WCLA) recommended Andy Spano for Assembly. Thirty-seven years later, Choice Matters urges voters to re-elect him as County Executive. Spano has worked to ensure that Westchester County Democratic candidates support women's reproductive rights. Spano's 2000 initiative to make prescription contraceptives available to County employees participating in the County's health benefit plan, underscored the impact a County Executive has on reproductive rights.

#### Astorino: The Extreme Right

Rob Astorino is endorsed by the Right to Life (RTL) Committee, but clearly doesn't want pro-choice voters to know it; he doesn't include the endorsement on his literature.

If elected, Astorino could submit a budget that cuts family planning, child care, the Office for Women, and women's projects. He could appoint anti-choice individuals to key positions, such as Commissioners of Health, Corrections, Social Services, Hospitals, and the Medical Center Board. He could lobby for federal and state anti-choice legislation, and sign anti-choice local laws.

On November 3, exercise your right to choose by re-electing pro-choice County Executive Andy Spano!

\* [www.righttolife-9jd.com](http://www.righttolife-9jd.com)

#### Lesnick for Yonkers City Council President

Chuck Lesnick, a staunch pro-choice ally of Choice Matters, is running for re-election for City Council President. He is being challenged by RTL endorsed anti-choice Castro-Blanco. Yonkers is the fourth largest city in the State of New York. We have to make sure that Chuck Lesnick keeps moving it forward.

#### District 5: Westchester Needs Bill Ryan

The re-election of William (Bill) Ryan is key to electing a solid pro-choice County Legislature. Ryan is a pro-choice advocate and leader, as well as a longtime friend and supporter of Choice Matters.

As a member of the New York State Assembly in the 1980s, Ryan was an active and vocal advocate for Choice. In his first campaign for the County Board in 1997 he pledged to continue fighting for a woman's right to choose and he has done so without fail. Ryan has "more faith in women making the right decision for themselves than in government making it for them...A woman's right to choose is absolute and should not be subject to legislation."

Ryan is currently the Chair of the Board of Legislators.

Ryan's opponent—a high profile former football player and sports bar owner with no experience in elected office—is endorsed by the Right to Life (RTL) Committee. His claim to fame is that in 1988 he tried to register to vote as a member of both the Republican and RTL parties.

See another endorsement on page 2

# A Few Salient Points

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett  
President/Chair of the Board



**1** The Right to Life (RTL) Committee has more endorsed candidates on the ballot than at any time during the Bush administration. There are different explanations why but the fact remains the same: extremists are coming out of the woodwork. Just look at the dramatic increase in clinic violence and the murder of Dr. Tiller.

**2.** Choice Matters does not survive on air. We need you and your contributions. We have had a terrible year financially. We honestly were not sure we'd make it to this election, but with the help of friends and contributions as small as \$5 we're here, in a new format.

We need you if we are going to be here in 2010 which promises to be a heck of an election year. Please

make a contribution so that we can keep on going!

**3.** Many anti-choice candidates are using the term *pro-choice* as a marketing term. Because Westchester's voters are Choice voters these candidates redefine *pro-choice* to include themselves, claiming they don't want to reverse *Roe*, they simply want to impose numerous restrictions on pregnant women, those seeking an abortion, and stem cell research. (Beware: these candidates only want to take away *most* of your rights!)

**4.** We've been busy working on health care reform, legislation, and EC education—but nothing is more important than elections. Westchester has a pro-choice County Executive and a pro-choice majority on the County Board of Legislators. That's Not an Accident! Choice Matters has been working hard for years to protect women's rights here in the County and in the State.

On November 3, we the voters decide who runs our County. Elect the wrong people and watch how quickly funding for women's health care is cut and barriers to birth control and abortion are erected. Remember, the County candidates we elect in 2009 are tomorrow's candidates for higher office.

## Health Care Reform: Is Being a Woman a Pre-Existing Condition?

Insurance companies can and do discriminate based solely on gender.

\* In seven states plus the District of Columbia, "getting beaten up by your spouse is a pre-existing condition." (Huffington Post, Ryan Grim, 9/14/09) The insurance industry logic is that if a woman has been beaten in the past, she'll probably be beaten again and is therefore more expensive to insure. Insurance company logic: Victimize the victim a second time by denying coverage.

\* Only 14 states have a requirement for maternity care and the number of plans without maternity coverage continues to rise dramatically. (Kaiser Family Foundation.) Active opponent of health care reform insurance company Anthem Blue Cross says, "having a child is a matter of choice"; it's optional, unlike diabetes or heart disease, and therefore not necessary to insure. (Curious, many anti-choice Senators and Representatives opposing reform and defending the insurance companies don't see pregnancy as a Choice...)

\* Many insurers consider a Caesarean-section birth a pre-existing condition and refuse to cover women who have had the procedure. Others charge women exorbitant premium increases. The number of C-sections performed in the United States has been growing steadily; approximately 30 percent of women today have had the procedure. Women who get sterilized after a C-section can sometimes get coverage.

## District 9: Re-Elect Pro-Choice Bill Burton

**B**ill Burton, a former Ossining Town Supervisor for six years, is running for his third term on the CBL. Burton is a solid vote for reproductive health and services on the Westchester County Board.

In contrast, his opponent, Susan Konig, is rabidly anti-choice. Endorsed by the Right to Life Committee, she opposes all abortion rights AND embryonic stem cell research. As a matter of fact, she equates embryonic stem cell research with buying a fur coat made of baby animals, and ridicules the injured such as Ratso Rizzo from *Midnight Cowboy* comparing him to a rat with a bum leg. (Her words not ours!) Young, well-spoken and articulate, she is dangerous and is definitely looking for a future in politics. Westchester's pro-choice voters need to stop Konig now! Re-elect Bill Burton.

### Choice Matters, Inc. © 2009

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### WCLA-PAC

235 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605

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### Please help!

Send us your e-mail address and let us know if you are interested in volunteering. Both help save us money! Write to us at [choicematters@choicematters.org](mailto:choicematters@choicematters.org). Thank you.

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

# 2009 PRO Choice Voting Guide

WCLA-PAC

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

## SUPREME COURT JUSTICE (vote for four)

### • 9th Judicial District

Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess and Orange counties

**FRANCESCA CONNOLLY (D,W)**  
**JAMES HUBERT (D,I,W)**  
**JEFFREY COHEN (D,C,W)**  
**DAVID STEINBERG (D,W)**

Orazio Bellantoni (R,I,C,RTL) ® ¥  
Charles Stewart (R,C)  
Charles Wood (R,I,C)

### **WILLIAM L. MAHER (R)**

James Alexander Burke (RTL) ® ¥  
Stasia T. Vogel (RTL) ® ¥  
Mary N. Clark (RTL) ® ¥

## COUNTY COURT JUDGE (vote for one)

### **JOHN COLANGELO (D,W)**

Raymond Belair (RTL) ® ¥

## COUNTY EXECUTIVE

### **ANDY SPANO (D,C,W)\***

Robert Astorino (R,I) ¥

## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

### **JANET DIFIORE (D,C)\***

Dan Schorr (R)

### **TONY CASTRO (I,W)**

Anthony DeCintio Jr (RTL) ® ¥

## COUNTY CLERK

### **TIMOTHY IDONI (D,W)\***

### **ROBERT MORABITO (R,I,C)**

Raphael L. Guida (RTL) ¥

## WESTCHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATOR

### • District 1

Peekskill, Buchanan, parts of Yorktown and Cortlandt

Domenic Volpe (D, W)

John Testa (R,I,C)

### • District 2

Mt. Kisco, Bedford, North Salem, Lewisboro,

Pound Ridge and part of Somers

### **PETER B. HARCKHAM (D,I,W)\***

Parties: D: Democrat R: Republican  
I: Independence C: Conservative  
W: Working Families RTL: Right to Life

## Choice Matters Endorsement Policy, 2009

Choice Matters' endorsements are made by its Board of Directors.

Choice Matters' endorsements are determined case by case. To be considered for endorsement, candidates must complete and return Choice Matters' questionnaire and participate in an interview if requested.

All endorsements are made on a strictly non-partisan basis. The Board of Directors discusses the questionnaires, incumbents' and opponents' records, leadership, and helpfulness during the legislative session. They seek consistency between candidates' actions, interviews and questionnaire responses. Each race is voted separately.

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 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 regulations
- 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, and neither seek nor accept the Right to Life Party nomination.

### • District 3

North Castle, Pleasantville, and parts of Harrison, Mt. Pleasant and Briarcliff Manor

### **JOHN NONNA (D,I,W)\***

### • District 4

New Castle and parts of Yorktown and Somers

### **MICHAEL KAPLOWITZ (D,I)\***

Gregory P Kane (R,C) ¥

### • District 5

Scarsdale, parts of White Plains

### **WILLIAM J RYAN (D,W)\***

Bob Hyland (R,I,C) ¥

### • District 6

Rye Brook, Port Chester, and parts of Harrison and Rye Town

### **MARTIN ROGOWSKY (D,C)\***

### • District 7

Rye City, Mamaroneck Town, Larchmont, and parts of the Village of Mamaroneck, New Rochelle and Rye Town

### **JUDY MYERS (D,W)\***

### • District 8

Elmsford, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown and parts of White Plains, Greenburgh and Mt. Pleasant

### **ALFREDA WILLIAMS(D,W)**

Thomas J Bock (R,I,C) ¥

### • District 9

Croton, Town and Village of Ossining, parts of Briarcliff Manor and Cortlandt

### **WILLIAM BURTON (D,W)\***

Susan Konig (R,I,C) ¥

### • District 10

Tuckahoe and parts of New Rochelle and Eastchester

### **VITO PINTO (D,W)\***

### • District 11

Pelham, Pelham Manor and parts of New Rochelle

### **JAMES MAISANO (R,I,C,W)\***

### • District 12

Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington and parts of Greenburgh

### **THOMAS ABINANTI (D)\***

### • District 13

Parts of Mt. Vernon

Lyndon D. Williams (D)\*

Dorothy Fiorillo (R,I,C) ¥

### • District 14

Parts of Yonkers and Mt. Vernon

### **BERNICE SPRECKMAN (R,I,C)\***

### • District 15

Bronxville and parts of Yonkers and Eastchester

Gordon Burrows (R,I,C)\*

### • District 16

Parts of Yonkers

### **KEN JENKINS (D,I,C,W)\***

### • District 17

Parts of Yonkers

### **JOSE ALVARADO (D,W)\***

Sandy Annabi (I,C)

## YONKERS CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

### **CHUCK LESNICK (D,W)\***

James Castro-Blanco (R,I,C) ¥

## Key to ratings:

### **ENDORSED**

PRO-CHOICE, NOT ENDORSED

Anti-choice \* Incumbent

¥ Endorsed by the Right to Life

9th Judicial District

® Former RTL candidate

## Putting our archives online

Choice Matters plans to make available the most extensive library of materials regarding women's health and the reproductive rights movement possibly in existence. Now, to research this field, one must physically travel to libraries across the country. Very little can be researched on the web.

Our archives provide an invaluable resource to universities and high schools. Simply put, we are ground zero for reproductive rights history information, much of which could be considered 'primary source' material.



**The Voting Guide is inside this newsletter. Use your power to vote to protect Choice!**

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PLEASE SAVE OR RECYCLE.

## A Historic Snapshot of Choice

From 1975 through 1983 the anti-choice County Board of Legislators (CBL) repeatedly petitioned the NYS Legislature to end Medicaid funding of abortion and to pass a parental notification bill; it passed a *local law* requiring parental notification for abortion, and petitioned Congress to hold a Constitutional Convention at which it could pass a human life amendment reversing *Roe*.

In sharp contrast, when voters, using our Yellow ProChoice Voting Guide, elected a pro-choice majority to the Board, the CBL petitioned Congress to rescind the federal “gag rule” and asked it to pass the Freedom of Choice Act. They also asked the NYS Legislature to pass the Health Care Facilities Access Bill.

## — BEWARE —

The following candidates are endorsed by  
the Right to Life 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

Rob Astorino  
Gregory P. Kane  
Bob Hyland  
Thomas J. Bock  
Susan Konig  
Dorothy Fiorillo  
James Castro-Blanco

[www.righttolife-9jd.com](http://www.righttolife-9jd.com)

## Choice Matters has a phenomenal educational program!

The EC Outreach Initiative (“The Initiative”) focuses on reducing the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing Plan B Emergency Contraception (EC) awareness. We’re on the streets, in the schools, at train stations and parks—everywhere where kids are. They love our Choice Matters Plan B couch which goes with us whenever possible.

EC is a high dose of birth control which can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex if taken within five days but is most effective if taken within three. It is now available over-the-counter for individuals 17 and older because of actions taken by a 17-year-old with ties to Choice Matters. Represented by the Center for Reproductive Rights, Choice Matters president Catherine Lederer-Plaskett and her daughter Aliza joined in a lawsuit against the FDA that challenged the 2006 decision to limit over-the-counter (OTC) access to Plan B to individuals 18 years of age and older, despite recommendations made to the contrary by its own advisory boards. They were victorious and because Aliza was the sole 17-year-old plaintiff in the case, her actions changed the lives of 17-year-olds nationwide. Aliza at 17 fell into the category of women whom all scientists at the FDA agreed could safely and appropriately use Plan B as an OTC drug, but were arbitrarily barred by the acting head of the FDA who imposed an age cut-off of 18.