

## EC in the ER: A Reality, Finally

After a nearly four year battle, "Emergency Contraception in the Emergency Room" bill (A.15a/S.202a) passed the NYS Legislature. With the expected signing of the bill into law by Governor Pataki, hospitals throughout New York State will be required to counsel sexual assault survivors about emergency contraception (EC) and to offer it on-site.

In the weeks preceding the passage of this legislation, the Catholic Conference had launched renewed opposition to the bill. The Catholic Conference opposed two distinct sections of the proposed legislation: They wanted a cap of 72 hours to be placed on the requirement to offer EC. This request came despite the publication in The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology of a new study which indicates that emergency contraception can prevent pregnancies if taken up to 120 hours after intercourse, nearly two more days than previous studies have shown. The study also showed that the 11% decline in abortion rates from 1994 to 2000 resulted from women's use of emergency contraception. The other major sticking point for the Catholic Confer-

ence was focused on language. They demanded the removal of language in the bill that stated that emergency contraception does not cause abortion. They also wanted a phrase added that stated contraceptives must be provided to rape victims "when medically appropriate."

Ultimately, by reaching a compromise in the eleventh hour of this year's Senate session, pro-choice Republican Nick Spano was able to shepherd his bill through the New York State Senate. Language changes were made and a provision was added to the bill stating that hospitals were not required to provide EC if the sexual assault survivor were pregnant. The passage of this bill makes New York State the first state on the East Coast to pass such legislation. Only Washington, California, and New Mexico have already instituted similar laws. In addition, currently nearly a dozen other states, including Maryland, Hawaii, Minnesota, and New Hampshire have comparable legislation pending.

Assemblymember Susan John and Senator Nick Spano sponsored this legislation in the Assembly and Senate respectively.

## Tapes, Lies and Fraud

Westchester Women for Abortion. Sound somewhat familiar? We thought so and so did a lot of other people.

In May, 2003, WCLA received calls from concerned citizens and the media asking if we were making telephone calls supporting Assemblyman Michael Spano in his bid for the office of Mayor of Yonkers. This was more than a little curious because WCLA does not get involved in local races below the office of Westchester County Board of Legislators.

Our curiosity aroused, we began making inquiries. Imagine our surprise to discover that individuals calling themselves *Westchester Women for Abortion* were placing horrific pre-recorded calls to Republican and Conservative voters registered in Yonkers-calls that were intended to make the recipient believe they came from a pro-choice organization. The goal: to mislead the public on the issue of abortion; to deliberately misstate Assemblyman Spano's positions on the question of choice; and, most important to their success, to inflame the passions of the targeted voters.

There is no such group as *Westchester Women for Abortion*, apparently. A group of individuals hoping to destroy Mike Spano's chances at winning the Republican and Conservative party primaries was making calls under a name



...  
*Honoring long-time volunteers  
William Gips and Clare Stuart  
and supporters of choice*

*Lawrence Gralla, Dolly Maass and Josephine Spano*

...  
*Keynote Speaker:*

*Hon. David A. Paterson, NY Senate Minority Leader*

*See the response coupon on page 11.*

**wcla**

**31 years old!**



# Welcome to the Future

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett  
President/Chair of the Board



I am proud to report that I have been given the great privilege of being named president of WCLA. Given the Bush agenda, heading any pro-choice organization would be a huge responsibility; given the stature and mission of this organization, the challenges become, if possible, even more formidable.

Under Polly Rothstein's leadership, WCLA grew into a powerful political organization based upon the understanding of the power of the voter. We-WCLA staff and volunteers-are carrying on where she left off.

We are reaching out to our base of 70,000 households with our newsletters, mailings, and phone calls. Our web site is used as a research tool for the pro-choice community across the nation and around the world. A grant I obtained is enabling us to update the site making it more user-friendly and attractive to younger voters. We are expanding our data base within Westchester and beyond. On a daily basis, trained phoners are identifying pro-choice voters and adding them to our data base. We have always actively supported pro-choice candidates and elected officials within Westchester; now we are gearing up to support those same candidates and representatives in areas of their districts that reach beyond Westchester.

At a time when our civil rights are being eroded, the environment is under attack, unemployment is reaching heights not seen in decades, and we are swimming in the national deficit, it is essential that we keep the

See Welcome on page 5

## Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion, Inc. © 2003

237 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605  
914/946-5363 • www.wcla.org

President: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett  
Executive Director: Judith A. Kaufman  
Assistant: Lenore Young

Board of Directors: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, Chair; Noam Bramson, Tamika Coverdale, Robert Fertik, Neil McCarthy, Joseph Melhado, Nancy S. Tunis, Deena Weintraub, Eve Widdows

Editor: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett

Editorial Contributors: Sandy Birnbach, Noam Bramson, Jessica Eisenberg, Judith A. Kaufman, Judi Lerman, Susan Moser, Polly Rothstein, Deena Weintraub

Circulation: 70,000

Founded in 1972

# On the President Emerita's Mind

By Polly Rothstein



This is the last column I shall write for ProChoice. After 30 years as head of WCLA and a year and a half writing this column after retiring, it's time. I won't be maudlin or sappy.

First, my message of appreciation to the volunteers over 30 years, including some who worked in my house before we had our first modest office. Some helped for many years, and I mean years. I'm glad we have volunteers in the office every day; they are dedicated and such a treat to have. We all know WCLA exists because of the generosity of the thousands — yes, thousands — of contributors who trusted us to use their money well (which we did). Our donors include the one who hand-delivered a dollar, the ones who gave repeatedly, and the ones whose checks were eye-poppers. I can't give enough thanks to the coordinators who did countless tasks, kept things orderly, and made the office a place where volunteers enjoyed the company. I've had kudos heaped on me, but it belongs to you. You've earned it.

I planned to tell what came to mind, not a chronicle of my years here. But my friend Kimberly said I must tell about getting into abortion rights. Okay, the short version. In 1958 my friend Patty and I left home in Fairfield, Conn. and headed for Cambridge, Mass., where I would share her apartment. I was very excited. Birth control was illegal in both states and as we drove, Patty stunned naïve me with the news that she was pregnant and had to "get rid of it." Yikes. Her doctors wouldn't help for fear of going to jail or losing their licenses. Patty called everyone she knew for the name of someone — anyone — who would do an abortion. A guy named Mike sent us to Ashland, Penn. I drove, and fantasized the unspeakable moment when I'd call her stern parents and confess what we did and that she was dead. We didn't know it, but Mike had sent us to Dr. Robert Spencer, the savior of countless women, whose letters of thanks filled volumes. This hero is mentioned in all books about illegal abortions, some of which were not in back alleys. So here I am, a retiree from abortion politics.

See Polly on page 9

## Book Review

# Ideas Triumphant: Strategies for Social Change and Progress

by Lawrence Lader (Seven Locks Press, 2002, 2003)

By Deena Weintraub

Lawrence Lader's greatest gift as writer and thinker is his ability to present the complexities and ambiguities of history, ideas, and connections, in cogent, forceful language. In this slim 170-odd page book (his 12<sup>th</sup>, by the way), he presents his over-arching thoughts, derived from years of experience fighting for women's reproductive freedoms. It is a book that will have most of us nodding in agreement and in frustration that so much needs to be done for women and families.

When Lader departs from an expository explanation of history, he shows strength in his analyses of the forces and ideas that could (and did) produce such giants as Margaret Sanger, and, indeed, what ideas were enabled by Sanger's own writings and activities. It is only by bringing in events such as the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912 that we can see

the synthesis of a nascent labor movement and Sanger's own ideas. It is only by looking at the French Revolution that we can see why the growth of birth control became urgent in Europe before England or the U.S. Lader puts it clearly and succinctly and leaves us stunned with his perceptions. The past is prologue. We knew it, but we didn't know it.

Lader approaches the contemporary story of abortion rights as one who personally fought for these rights, as a co-founder of NARAL and a colleague of Polly Rothstein and her fledgling WCLA. He walked and talked with some extraordinarily brave legislators, religious groups, physicians, and a population of women who would not take "no" for their answer. Sanger had spoken of birth control: the civil rights movement of the '60s had spoken of the essential dignity of humanity; Betty Friedan spoke of women's lives. With this as background, abortion went from an idea to revolution in only seven years. The right to birth control took decades by comparison. Lader takes us into the process of how an idea originates and why it leaps from theory to politics and social war."

Lader explores the opposition to abortion rights, reproductive rights, and women's rights, showing the fear tactics and smears used by an unscrupulous opposition to defeat the ERA. And the author looks at perhaps the most controversial idea of all: Death with Dignity. Controlling one's own destiny. What a concept!

We should all read this book. And then read it again. And yet again. It should be part of us all. It really is part of us all.

## Notes From the Executive Director

By Judith A. Kaufman  
Executive Director

WCLA has decided that the time has come to get out and party! We want to refresh, rejuvenate and energize the pro-choice community here at home. It has obviously been a bleak and often depressing period since Bush and his right-wing extremists gained control in Washington. However, we cannot let that keep us down or deter us from continuing the fight to keep abortion and reproductive health care safe, legal and available.

To this end, WCLA has decided to begin a new tradition. We are instituting the first annual WCLA 4-Choice Awards Luncheon to formally recognize and honor a few of the many people who have made an outstanding and noticeable difference to WCLA and its ability to carry out its mission of protecting reproductive rights. In addition to being able to thank some of those who have made WCLA the success it is, the brunch will provide a wonderful opportunity for all our friends and



supporters to join together in an informal and congenial setting to break bread, catch up, celebrate past successes and plan new ones.

The event will be held at noon at The VIP Club in New Rochelle on Sunday, September 21, 2003. We are especially happy to report that New York State Senator and Minority Leader David A. Paterson has agreed to be our keynote speaker. We will be take some time to recognize five "unsung heroes" in the, unfortunately, never-ending battle to preserve and protect a woman's right to choose. We hope you will mark the date on your calendar and join us.

In another first, WCLA will launch its inaugural "Walk for Choice" this fall. The walk will not be long but it will be a great way to show the world that we are not going away, that our cause is as important today as it was 30 years ago, that the job is not done and that the pro-choice community is alive, well and a force to be reckoned with. It will also send a strong message to the anti-choice extremists that Westchester County is not going to cede ground.

On Sunday, October 26, 2003, please meet us near

See Notes on page4

# Anti-Choice Politics: Back in Fashion

The issue of a woman's right to choose has clearly re-entered the political election debate in Westchester. Through the last election cycle that discussion was left to the Right to Life (sic) party. Even George W. Bush did not make it the center piece in his 2000 campaign. However, after two and a half years of the most aggressive anti-choice appointments, policy, and legislation to ever come out of Washington, local extremists are getting busy.

Some, claiming that abortion at any time is wrong, fill the airwaves, newspapers and mailboxes with clearly misleading and, more often than not, simply wrong material.

Others try to play both sides against the middle. Knowing the number and power of the pro-choice electorate, many candidates want to be known as pro-choice *kind of*. For example, Vincenza (Vinni) Restiano wants to don the pro-choice label BUT as president of the Yonkers City Council she voted to support the so-called Partial Birth Abortion (PBA) Ban passed by the US Senate. When asked, in a telephone interview with WCLA president Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, whether she realized that the bill passed by the Senate did not make allowances for a woman's health and safety as required by Roe, Restiano responded that she was voting for the ban. When it was pointed out that no such procedure existed, that PBA was not a medical term but was created by anti-abortion leaders, Restiano repeated that she was voting to support it. Even after Lederer-Plaskett advised her that, just like the Nebraska ban before it, the most recent law would not survive a Supreme Court challenge, Restiano once again repeated that she was voting to support the ban.

Why would Restiano take such a stand, especially after

she had tried to enlist WCLA's support in her City Council campaign a few years ago? Knowing that a resolution by the Yonkers City Council is of no legal consequence, Restiano was making a calculated political decision. She is trying to confuse the Yonkers voters in order to take votes away from her two political opponents, anti-choice Amicone and pro-choice Mike Spano. For those voters that are anti-choice she can now champion this single vote. To the Yonkers pro-choice community she will simply claim to be pro-choice.

This fraudulent misrepresentation of the issues is becoming commonplace. One of the few things that the pro-choice and anti-choice communities can probably agree on is that these actions help no one other than the candidate. It is incumbent upon the voter to look closely, whether the election is being held in Eastchester, New Rochelle, Yonkers or anywhere else. Remember WCLA does not get involved in these local elections. However, if you have a question about a candidate, give us a call. If we know her/his history on choice we'll be sure to tell you.

## Notes, from page 3

the Westchester County Center. The walk will begin at 11 A.M. and will head into downtown White Plains. We will congregate at the brand new fountain at the corner of Main St. and Mamaroneck Ave. Everyone is welcome. Registration begins at 10:00 A.M. Please see the last page of this newsletter for more details.

Finally, on a national level, WCLA is helping to organize a march on Washington to deliver the same message to the White House and the country. This March for Freedom of

Choice is scheduled for April 25, 2004. We hope you will mark your calendar and join us.

Please save the dates.

Join us!

Recharge your batteries! Get active!

Let's celebrate our cause, our strength and our commitment!



**Vote  
Vote  
Vote**

# Getting to Know County Legislators

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic County Legislator in Yonkers for the 16<sup>th</sup> District, is an important voice in Westchester's pro-choice community. She has worked tirelessly to keep women's issues at the forefront of the agenda for the County Board of Legislators. After winning the seat in her very first bid for public office in 1995, she has been a coalition builder in her work to improve the lives of Westchester's women and children.



When Stewart-Cousins was Chair of the Health Committee, she was instrumental in bringing the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program to Yonkers as a pilot project. SANE helps victims of sexual abuse by providing expert services 24 hours a day, seven

days a week, 365 days per year. It was such a success that SANE has now become a national program.

Stewart-Cousins, in collaboration with other County Board members, has focused attention on domestic violence. One of their achievements is a County a program that allows local police to use special equipment to gather "instant photographic evidence." These photos have helped convict batterers.

As a member of the Budget Committee, Stewart-Cousins has been a vocal advocate for increasing the number of day care slots. Since 1996, the legislature has more than doubled the number of slots available.

Stewart-Cousins serves as the Board's Majority Whip. Currently serving her fourth term in office, Stewart-Cousins is the first African American woman to chair the Board's powerful Legislation Committee. As chair, she authored the County's first Human Rights legislation which took effect in 1999 and created a commission that has been called "the most progressive in the nation."



*On June 6<sup>th</sup>, Alan Hevesi stopped by the WCLA office to thank our staff and volunteers for playing a key role in his victory last November. Hevesi was featured in ProChoice newsletters and WCLA-PAC made over 80,000 GOTV calls in support of him. Hevesi, a longtime supporter and activist for choice, won the NYS Comptroller race by a 3% margin. Choice was the deciding issue. Thank you WCLA pro-choice voters!*

Welcome, from page 3

faith-the faith in grassroots organizing.

Grassroots outreach is our most successful weapon in the fight to insure that women retain legal control over their bodies. It was that approach that produced the groundswell that led to massive marches on Washington, precedent-setting court cases, the founding of WCLA, and the electing of pro-choice leaders to public office. Women-co-workers, PTA moms, girl scout leaders, commuter buddies, church friends, and so many more-talked. They talked over coffee, on the train, and at bus stops, often in small groups and privately. Usually, the conversations were prompted by one woman's 'situation.' Then the dialogues expanded, encompassing concerns about the availability of contraception and our daughters' futures.

A friend once told me that, "With friends and relatives you drink tea." Translated, that means it is considered socially improper to talk about politics, religion, or money with friends. Well, women either didn't know or didn't care about 'proper.' They cared about health and safety, about medical care, about their futures, and about their families. Together we became a united front and a force to be reckoned with.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the pro-choice community has become complacent. Roe and eight years of a pro-choice administration under Clinton allowed a false sense of security to set in. Worst of all, the anti-choicers co-opted our grassroots approach while we sat passively by 'drinking tea.'

I am here to announce those days are over. We are swearing off 'tea.' With WCLA leading the way, we are taking to the streets. (Literally, on Sunday Oct. 26, 2003.) We are meeting in homes, in schools, in churches and in temples. We need you. WCLA has returned to its grassroots roots. Any meeting you're having, we want to be there. A group of one or a group of twenty, we want to be there, not to debate but to explain. The terms are complex, but the issue really isn't. You love your wife, your mother, your daughter. Let us help you understand the issues that confront her, and why your vote matters.

# Connecting the Dots

It's back! The Unborn Victims of Violence Act (H.R. 1997, UVVA) has been resurrected, and this time, to ensure that it carries an adequate emotional punch, it has been dubbed "Laci and Connor's Law" after Laci Peterson, who was eight months pregnant at the time of her murder.

This legislation is a direct assault on the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, and that is exactly what is intended. The Bush administration, anti-choice legislators and extremists have adopted the strategy to redefine a fetus as an "unborn child," giving it the same status as you and I, because then abortion can be redefined. It becomes homicide.

Systematically over the last two and a half years, the Bush Administration has been implementing this approach: In January and March 2002, (immediately after Bush took office), first Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson proposed regulations designating "unborn children" eligible for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and then the Bush Administration followed

suit by proposing new rules making 'a fetus' eligible for coverage under SCHIP. Neither Thompson nor the Administration proposed extending the coverage to the pregnant woman.

In September 2002, Bush completed the process by issuing final regulations granting a fetus health care coverage under SCHIP. No coverage was granted to the pregnant woman.

In October 2002, Bush moved on. He issued a new definition of "human research subjects" in the charter of the Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections: embryos and fetuses are to receive the same protection as human beings.

Now, in the summer of 2003, it is time to redefine a fetus legislatively. The Unborn Victims of Violence Act separates the fetus from the woman in the eyes of the law, creating separate and equal personhood for the fetus at any stage of gestation with the same rights as the adult women who are carrying them. This legislation passed twice in the House since 1999, but stalled in the Senate.

Despite the fact that the bill pur-

ports to protect the health and rights of women and their families, it does not. This legislation does not protect pregnant women from violent assault and fails to address the very real need for strong federal legislation to prevent and punish violent crimes against women. But truthfully it was not intended to do so. If that were the purpose, the Bush Administration could simply have proposed laws which stiffen the penalty for an assault on a pregnant woman.

SCHIP coverage changes, the new definition of "human research subjects," and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act do not stand independent of one another. They are building blocks used by the Bush Administration to systematically undermine legal abortion. The strategy is fiendishly brilliant. As the word *fetus* is redefined, women—pregnant or not—are also redefined. The clock is slowly but methodically being turned back. Disguised as "compassionate," this strategy lays the legal groundwork for the repeal of abortion.

## Lest We Forget

A young woman in her twenties, the mother of one child, and a severe diabetic, was admitted to the hospital and I was asked to see her in consultation. . . . She was critically ill, dying in fact from the complications of diabetes. She was also pregnant. I went to the head of my department, Dr. Morgan [not his real name]. . . . I presented the case to him and I said that I thought in order to prolong her life we better terminate the pregnancy and he said, "We don't do that." I said, "What do you mean? We would be doing it to save her life, and there are such statutes on the book," and I went to the library and got the statute and showed it to him, and he said, "We don't do abortions," and she died. And this so upset me. She was going to die eventually but her life could have been prolonged.

## Nightmares of Today

States across the nation are imposing a range of regulations to restrict access to abortion services. New York has not joined this group *yet*, but, unless the pro-choice community votes the issue, this will not remain true.

### The Impact

Beginning with this issue, ProChoice will include a new regular feature about abortion *today*. We hope the featured stories will help our readers understand the real and destructive impact these laws have on the ability of women to exercise their constitutional right to have an abortion.

### Becky Bell

In the prime of her life, Becky Bell, a 17-year-old Indiana teenager, died of a massive septic infection from a botched illegal abortion. At the time, Indiana required that a young woman obtain the consent of a parent or a judge before having an abortion. To avoid "disappointing" her parents by telling them that she was pregnant, Becky did what hundreds of thousands of women did before legalized abortion—she bought "medical care" in the back alley.

Join us for the Walk for Choice!  
See the form on page 10!

# A Pro-Choice Republican's Lament

An op-ed piece by Jennifer Blei Stockman, the national chairwoman of the Republican Pro-Choice Coalition, was published in The Hartford Courant on July 21, 2003. As a lifelong Republican and a pro-choice leader, Stockman's perspective of the present administration's position on choice and its potential impact on the 2004 elections is of particular interest. Below are excerpts from that piece which was titled, "Ronald Reagan Would Not Be Amused."

*My family and friends still talk about the last presidential election, about the "heads I'm compassionate, tails I'm conservative" campaign that made them pause in the voting booth, about how Barbara Bush bristled when a reporter asked one too many questions comparing her views on abortion to her son's. They wonder if Katherine Harris would have had her episode in the limelight if the Bush campaign had been more centrist and spent more time on the compassionate side of his spinning coin. It's likely to be tougher this time around. After four years in office, Bush's record, not his rhetoric, will be the baseline, and the administration's record on a woman's right to choose — a touchstone issue for moderate Republicans — leaves a lot to be desired in the compassion department.*

*Not that this is an issue where Republicans will ever universally agree. The debate has continued unabated since 1980, when, in Detroit, Ronald Reagan became our party's*

*standard bearer and when the anti-choice plank was first added to the GOP platform to appease the Christian right. This contentious plank contradicts the fact that 80 percent of all voting Americans believe in a woman's right to choose and that more than four out of 10 Republicans believe that Roe vs. Wade should prevail. Maybe that's why the president has pro-choice Republicans in the White House and even in his own Cabinet.*

*The so-called pro-life community may affect a moral superiority on the issue, but the vast majority of Americans believe that this intensely agonizing decision should be a personal and medical decision, one made among a woman, her family and her God, without government interference. We pro-choice Americans come from many faiths and traditions and are also parents who treasure our families and all children. Are we not also pro-life?*

*What I don't understand is why we Republicans refuse to even agree on ways to reduce the need for abortion. Statistics demonstrate that education, prevention and family-planning programs are key to reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancies. But extremists refuse to agree on any common ground that might remedy this dire situation, just to keep the debate politically charged, divisive and polarizing.*

*We will never see progress made while lawmakers are under fire from within their own party and GOP leaders are reluctant to set a compassionate, inclusive example.*

## Tapes, from page 1

similar to ours in order to confuse the recipient.

WCLA became concerned about the fraudulent nature of the calls and requested the Westchester County District Attorney investigate this outrageous attempt to con the voters of Yonkers. This conduct was an obvious threat to the integrity of the electoral process and a deliberate attempt to harm the good name, reputation and work of WCLA.

### Mike Spano's Record

Mike Spano has been a longtime supporter of a woman's right to choose and WCLA. He has received WCLA's endorsement each time he has run for the NYS Assembly. He understands the issues confronting women's reproductive rights and has voted accordingly.

Mike's voting record shows that he understands that no one, regardless of their ability to pay, should be denied the right to choose; therefore, he has supported Medicaid coverage, for those



Mike Spano

who qualify. The Assemblyman has educated himself on the issue of abortion and knows that there is no such procedure called "partial birth abortion." It is a term created by anti-abortion leaders and is not a medical term. Spano knows the PBA bans under consideration would criminalize a whole range of medically recommended abortion procedures, threaten women's health, and insert government directly into the relationship between doctor and

patient. Mike has supported the Women's Health and Wellness bill, the Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, and Emergency Contraception for Rape Survivors legislation. WCLA wishes Mike Spano all the best in his quest to become the Mayor of the City of Yonkers. But, we will miss his energy and support when he leaves the Assembly.

patient.

Mike has supported the Women's Health and Wellness bill, the Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, and Emergency Contraception for Rape Survivors legislation.

WCLA wishes Mike Spano all the best in his quest to become the Mayor of the City of Yonkers. But, we will miss his energy and support when he leaves the Assembly.

### Why Are You Pro-Choice?

Please write or email WCLA at [wcla@wcla.org](mailto:wcla@wcla.org) to let us know why you are pro-choice. We are starting a new project and want to include as many views as possible. The reasons may be posted on our website and periodically appear in our newsletters. All identifying information will be kept confidential. PLEASE PARTICIPATE!!!

**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.  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Opinion phone: 202/456-1111  
Fax 202/456-2461  
E-mail: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto: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](mailto:Senator@clinton.senate.gov)  
Hon. Charles E. Schumer [+] D,L,I  
212/486-4430; 202/224-6542  
[Senator@schumer.senate.gov](mailto: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](http://www.house.gov/writerep)  
CD 18 Nita Lowey [+] D  
914/428-1707; 202/225-6506  
[nita.lowey@mail.house.gov](mailto:nita.lowey@mail.house.gov)  
CD 19 Sue Kelly [+/-] R,C  
914/241-6340; 202/225-5441  
[dearsue@mail.house.gov](mailto:dearsue@mail.house.gov)

**Governor**

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

**NYS Senate**

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

SD 34 Guy Velella [-] R,C, I ◊  
718/792-7180; 518/455-3264  
[velella@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:velella@senate.state.ny.us)  
SD 35 Nicholas Spano [+] R,C, I ◊  
914/969-5194; 518/455-2231  
[spano@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:spano@senate.state.ny.us)  
SD 36 Ruth Hassell-Thompson [+] D  
518/455-2061  
[hassellt@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:hassellt@senate.state.ny.us)  
SD 37 Suzi Oppenheimer [+] D, W  
914/934-5250; 518/455-2031  
[oppenhei@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:oppenhei@senate.state.ny.us)  
SD 40 Vincent Leibell [-] R,C,I  
845/279-3773; 518/455-3111  
[leibell@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:leibell@senate.state.ny.us)  
  
Majority Leader Joseph Bruno [-] R,C, I  
518/455-3191  
[bruno@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:bruno@senate.state.ny.us)  
Health Committee Chair  
Kemp Hannon [-] R,C, I  
518/455-2200  
[hannon@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:hannon@senate.state.ny.us)

**NYS Assembly**

Hon. \_\_\_\_\_  
New York State Assembly  
Albany, New York 12248  
Switchboard 518/455-4100  
AD 87 Gary Pretlow [+] D, I, W  
914/667-0127; 518/455-5291  
[pretloj@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:pretloj@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 88 Amy Paulin [+] D,W, I  
914/723-1115; 518/455-5585  
[paulina@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:paulina@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 89 Adam T. Bradley [+] D, I, W  
914/686-7335; 518/455-5397  
[bradlea@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:bradlea@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 90 Sandra Galef [+] D, I, W  
914/941-1111; 518/455-5348  
[galefs@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:galefs@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 91 Ronald Tocci [+/-] R, C, I, W  
914/235-7900; 518/455-4897  
[toccir@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:toccir@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 92 Richard Brodsky [+] D, I, W  
914/345-0432; 518/455-5753  
[brodskr@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:brodskr@assembly.state.ny.us)

AD 93 Michael Spano [+] R,C, I, W  
914/779-8805; 518/455-3662  
[spanom@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:spanom@assembly.state.ny.us)  
AD 99 Willis H. Stephens Jr. R,C, I  
845/225-5038; 518/455-5783  
[stephew@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:stephew@assembly.state.ny.us)

Speaker: Sheldon Silver [+] D, L  
212/312-1420; 518/455-3791  
[speaker@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:speaker@assembly.state.ny.us)  
Health Committee Chair  
Richard Gottfried [+] D, L, W  
518/455-4941  
[gottfrr@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:gottfrr@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](mailto: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  
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 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10036  
Fax: 212/556-3622  
e-mail: [letters@nytimes.com](mailto:letters@nytimes.com)

The Journal News  
1 Gannett Drive  
White Plains, NY 10604  
Fax: 696-8396  
e-mail: [letters@thejournalnews.com](mailto:letters@thejournalnews.com)

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



Gladys and Estelle wanted to know how I knew to do what I did. I recalled the adage over the door of my high school: Learn by Doing. WCLA was in the vanguard, so I learned on the job. Lobbying for passage of the 1970 law to decriminalize abortion in NY State opened a new world. My niche was politics. I plunged in and with a few unsung heroes, like Marian Williams, built WCLA. I think I was successful because I wasn't accountable to a board; if I got an idea, I ran with it, worrying about paying for it later. This modus operandi was great for me but drove the Planned Parenthood public affairs committee crazy with envy. On to random thoughts.

Editing and writing for ProChoice was hard work but an excellent task, using my college newspaper experience. ProChoice presented the ups and downs of abortion rights, put the stories in perspective, and gave the big picture as well as the minutiae. We wrote stories that mainstream newspapers buried or ignored. Readers always turned to the Lest We Forget column. I favored editorials and my column.

I loved interviewing candidates who sought our endorsement. My reputation was such that several brain-washed Republicans said, "I didn't know you were nice!" Voters eagerly awaited our yellow Voting Guide, carried it when they went to vote and no candidates missed hearing about it.

Early on, I spoke at a hearing asking the county legislature to keep the back of Playland natural to protect wildlife. Sometime later, standing with my birding friends at the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County dinner, legislator Diane Keene walked over and asked, "So, you're against killing birds, but in favor of killing babies?" My friends were aghast.

I felt strongly about abortion rights and worked hard at it, but was interested in the process as much as the issue.

Rep. Hamilton Fish was overheard commenting casually, "Those right-to-lifers, they vote on abortion only — but the League of Women Voters and Polly Rothstein and her people look at a lot of things." This was a revelation. Single-issue voting was the key to winning a high-stakes numbers game. We in WCLA were foresighted and had already begun gathering names; Mr. Fish substantiated our plan. Bob Fertik appeared on the scene and together we thought up ProChoice IDEa (identification, education, and activation of pro-choice voters). He named it. We swung many elections, beginning with Suzi Oppenheimer in 1984 and turned the county from very anti- to very pro-choice. It was such a wonderful sense of victory when candidates vied for our endorsement and to be selected for our get-out-the-vote phoning, which is how WCLA's earned its powerhouse reputation.

A great moment: the first time we were referred to as "players" in local politics. Being taken seriously showed we were respected. More important, this was about **women with power**. As Reilly would say, "What a revoltin' development this is!"

I had a sense of history and cut-and-pasted countless articles into a folder, "Abortion," which split like mitosis into an archive with more than 23 cuticle-wrecking file drawers. There are some gems of abortion history from 1970. In the late 1990s I stopped using paper archives and began a computer filing system.

In 1974, I interviewed Nicholas Spano, a very young Republi-

can and Conservative candidate for Assembly. He didn't say the code words such as "sanctity of human life" that would have pegged him as a committed right-to-lifer, so I worked on him for 11 years, developing a friendly relationship but never letting go. In 1990 Nick told me he switched to supporting abortion rights. He immediately became the state Senate leader on our issue. Some activists consider this my most significant accomplishment.

The Right to Life Party emerged in 1978. WCLA buried them because there are more of us than them. In 2002, the RTL Party breathed its last.

We mixed the serious with the comic. We roared with laughter, or at least snickered, when mail came destined for the "nonsupportive correspondence" file or the bulletin board. One guy complained that we didn't put stamps on our return envelopes. Another closed with this enigmatic phrase: "And you surround yourself with midget baby killers." Huh? Another suggested that I douse myself with gasoline and light it. Someone sent a photo of me with horns and a mustache. The Martinelli newspapers ran a large-type front-page banner headline: "Nick Spano Beholden to Polly Rothstein And Pro-Abortion Political Group." Soon after: "Judas Spano Chooses Rothstein Over O'Connor Turns His Back On His Church for 30 Pieces Of Silver," with a picture of my head pasted to the body of the Grim Reaper with scythe. How exciting, my first cartoon!

I learned to "speak on my feet" when radio news directors called or cable TV came to the office to tape an interview. Eventually I was oh-so-calm when I spoke in public. At the Family Planning Advocates annual legislative conference in Albany, I participated and moderated panels and ran training workshops. A highlight was presenting to Sen. Nick Spano FPA's prestigious Margaret Sanger award in front of 1,000 activists. Who, me?

And hilarious moments. The candidate who was for abortion for "rape and incense." The Congressman who talked about women tying off their umbilical tubes. Sen. James Buckley: "American children have the right to be born."

"Quote me and I'll deny it" made a cynic of my daughter Amy. Gordon Burrows admitted parental consent was a bad bill, but he'd vote for it for political reasons. Conservatives I never met refer to me as Polly (infantilizing me). The former Greenburgh Conservative chairman Mike Reynolds sent out a pink flyer calling me the "devil incarnate." A caption in Gannett caused a stir by quoting someone referring to me as the anti-Christ. And George Pataki in 1984: "I never thought of abortion as a health issue."

And an unexpected heartwarming gesture: The Gannett paper ran a story with a photo when I was in the hospital in 1999. I received a lovely card from Vincent Natrella, chair of the Westchester Conservative Party.

Corporate bigwig Peter Grace, at the Knights of Malta dinner with President Ronald Reagan, had trouble with terminology: "Everyone who's for abortion was at one time themselves a feces. And that includes all of you out there. You were once a feces. So we thank you, Mr. President, and now dinner will be served."

Goodbye, everyone. I hope I'm gone but not forgotten.

And don't forget to vote.

# Registration form for WCLA's *Walk for Choice*

Please print clearly using a pen. One form per person.

First name	M.I.	Last name
<hr/>		
The address below is <input type="checkbox"/> work <input type="checkbox"/> home		
Street	City	State/ZIP
<hr/>		
Day phone	Evening phone	E-mail
<hr/>		
I am unable to attend, but here is my contribution of:		
<hr/>		
<p>WAIVER: In consideration of being permitted to participate in Walk For Choice, I hereby for myself, my heirs and personal representatives assume any and all risks which might be associated with the event. I further waive, release, discharge and covenant not to sue the Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion, its officers, employees, sponsors, organizers, volunteers or the representatives or their successors and assigns, for any and all injuries or damages of any kind whatsoever suffered as a result of taking part in the event and any related activities. I also agree to the use of any photo, film or videotape of the event for any purpose.</p>		
Signature: <hr/>		
Parent's signature (if participant is under 18) <hr/>		

## Pledge form

Sponsor's Name	Mailing address	City/State/Zip	Phone	Contribution
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				

Contributions to WCLA are not tax-deductible

# Hijacking A Woman's Right to Choose

By Rep. Nita M. Lowey

**B**efore the United States House of Representatives breaks for August recess, anti-choice legislators plan to bring the Unborn Victims of Violence Act to the floor for a vote. Once again we are faced with a decent idea gone horribly awry. The proponents of this bill have taken an important principle - the Constitutional right of a woman to have control over her own pregnancy - and hijacked it into the divisive world of abortion politics.



As a mother and grandmother, I very clearly believe that any person who injures or kills a pregnant woman and her fetus should be severely punished, and families should have appropriate redress for their loss. However, this legislation is not intended to address these issues. The American people can be certain that this bill is just another thinly veiled attempt to chip away at a woman's right to choose - plain and simple.

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act would provide a fetus the same legal recognition as you or I - for the first time in federal law. Instead of addressing the real issues at hand - the horrible pain for a woman who loses a pregnancy to a cowardly, violent act - this bill is an ideological marker for the anti-choice special interests. In fact, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) admits that it participated in the drafting of the bill, and according to the NRTL website, "[t]he bill challenges that [pro-choice] ideology by recognizing the unborn child as a human victim, distinct from the mother."

This bill is not about protecting pregnant women from violent acts. Rather, it is yet another flagrant attempt to undermine Roe v. Wade. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, confirmed this when he recently admitted that the measure could have an impact on

abortion law. "They say it undermines abortion rights. It does undermine it," he said. "But that's irrelevant."

If anti-choice members of the House want to recognize the fetus as a person, I believe the American people deserve to know this and express their support or opposition appropriately. However, for anti-choice legislators to tell pregnant women, that they are trying to protect them with this bill when there are existing state and federal laws that already accomplish this, is morally repugnant. The American people are smart and they deserve the truth.

If anti-choice lawmakers wish to crack down on criminals who would attack pregnant women, I encourage them to join with me in discussing the real issue of violence against women. When every year, over two million women in this country are physically abused by their husbands or boy-friends, a woman is physically abused every 15 seconds and one of every three abused children becomes an adult abuser or victim - two things are clear: violence against women deserves our full attention and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act will do nothing to protect these women from harm.

Time and time again I have stood on the House floor and asked my colleagues to work with me to help women improve their health, plan their pregnancies, and have healthier children. If lawmakers really want to do something for women, I encourage them to fully fund the Violence Against Women Act or pass my bill, the Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraception Coverage Act (EPICC), thus providing contraceptive coverage for all individuals once and for all.

Instead of finding new ways to revisit the abortion battle, Americans want lawmakers to work together to focus their efforts on providing women with access to prenatal care, affordable contraception, health education and violence prevention. The Unborn Victims of Violence Act achieves none of these goals and is no way to protect women.

---

## WCLA's 4-Choice Awards Luncheon, Sunday, Sept. 21, 2003, noon

VIP Club, 600 Davenport Avenue, New Rochelle

I will join the host committee:

Sustainer (\$5,000 and up)  Benefactor (\$2,500 to \$4,999)  Patron (\$1,000 to \$2,499)  Supporter (\$500 to \$999)

I can't join the host committee, but will attend the luncheon at \$125 per person. \_\_\_\_\_ people attending.

I simply wish to contribute to WCLA.

Hosts (Print first and last names. Couples and partners may share a listing.)

Non-host attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Visa, MC, AmEx \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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 to MC, Visa or AMEX, please call (914) 946-5363.

# WCLA's WALK FOR CHOICE

Join WCLA for its first ever  
WALK FOR CHOICE

**Come Celebrate:**  
Our Commitment  
Our Strength  
Our Cause

Let's take back the street!

Registration at 10 am  
Sunday, October 26, 2003  
at 11 am at the  
**White Plains County Center**  
(Rt. 119 and Central Avenue)  
Ends at Main Street & Mamaroneck Avenue

**Parking available:**  
Rt. 119 & Battle Hill  
White Plains Train Station  
Rt. 119 & Central Avenue

For further information contact the  
Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion  
**(914) 946-5363**

Please see registration form on page 10.

<b>Inside</b>	Anti-Choice Politics.....4	Republican's Lament.....7
Welcome to the Future..... 2	About Andrea Stewart-Cousins.....5	Your Elected Officials.....8
President Emerita's Mind..... 2	Alan Hevesi Visits.....5	Pledge Form.....10
Book Review.....3	Lest We Forget.....6	Nita Lowey.....11
Executive Director's Notes.....3	Today's Nightmares.....6	

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

Non-Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
New York, NY  
Permit No. 3020

Return Service Requested

**PROChoice**



PLEASE SAVE OR RECYCLE.