

WCLA Endorses Assemblyman Jeffrey Klein for NYS Senate

WCLA is proud to announce its endorsement of Assemblyman Jeffrey Klein in the Democratic Party primary for Senate District 34. Klein and his opponent, Assemblyman Stephen Kaufman, are vying for the vacant seat formerly held by Republican Senator Guy Veleva who resigned from office in May after pleading guilty to accepting bribes.

"WCLA is proud to support Jeff and we will work actively for his election," said Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, WCLA president. "Jeffrey Klein knows the issues and is strongly pro-choice. In contrast to his opponent, Jeff will continue to be a vocal advocate for women's reproductive health and freedom in the NYS Senate."

Although both Klein and Kaufman will appear on the

"W" Stands for "War on Women": Bush in Brief

By Heather Ostman and Catherine Lederer-Plaskett

The Supreme Court halted the recount of Florida ballots and effectively declared George W. Bush the winner of the presidential election in December 2000. Since that time, Bush has made it his mission to dismantle every aspect of women's rights, and civil rights as a whole, in this country. His attack on reproductive freedom is only a part of the overall assault he has inflicted on this nation's sense of justice, tolerance, and human dignity, to say nothing of his covert attacks on our intellectual, scientific, and academic communities.

Bush wasted no time implementing his agenda and catering to his electoral base. In December 2000, Bush named anti-choice extremists John Ashcroft to be the US Attorney General and former Governor Tommy Thompson to be Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. To celebrate his first day in office, as well as the 28th year anniversary of Roe v Wade, Bush reinstated the Reagan administration's Global Gag Rule, a.k.a. the Mexico City Policy, that limited international family planning services.

Knowing that the federal court system determines the direction of this country, George W. Bush has followed the right-wing court-packing plan that President Reagan began in the 1980s; he is filling the appeals courts with judges who, among other things, oppose a woman's right to choose. These are lifetime appointments. These judges who serve on the Circuit Courts of Appeal will hear cases on a wide variety of constitutional issues such as the right to privacy or what

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Democratic primary ticket on September 14, only one is hoping to sew up the election by appearing on three different party lines. Kaufman, who is a Democrat, is also seeking to be the Republican and Conservative parties' candidate. He is facing John Fleming, a former NY City detective, in those two primaries. Kaufman has already been endorsed by Republican Senate leadership as well as the Westchester County GOP.

Klein's Record

Assemblyman Jeffrey Klein has a great record on choice as well as non-discrimination issues. He has voted against every

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John Kerry on Choice: A Man of His Word

By Heather Ostman and Catherine Lederer-Plaskett

On the record and off, Senator John Kerry *not only* talks the talk, he votes it too! His record in Congress proves that he means it when he says he trusts in "women to make their own decisions." Since his first election to the US Senate in 1984, John Kerry (D-MA) has consistently upheld a woman's right to choose.

Following is a brief overview of some of Senator Kerry's pro-choice votes during the past six years. They show an understanding of the full spectrum of issues confronting the pro-choice community today.

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For You And Me, It's Personal!

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett
President/Chair of the Board



Years ago my husband handed me a Gloria Gaynor cd and said, "This is you!" He was referring to a song titled *You've Got To Do It Yourself*.

He was right. For good or for bad, Blanche Dubois I am not. I do not believe that I can rely on the kindness of strangers to get something done. "If you want it done right, do it yourself," too often rings true. I am sharing this with you not because you should know me better but because I believe if we are to win in 2004, Gloria Gaynor's words must become our personal mantra.

This election is already *personal*. Friendships are ending. A woman who had never been involved until this election told me with great concern that she had had friends that she no longer felt comfortable speaking with because "they are, you know...supporting Bush." Another person shared with me that a friend who had not seen *Fahrenheit 9/11* called it propaganda. What should she do? How could she reach the person? A man that I have known for years who has always been registered as an Independent, changed his party affiliation; now he's a Democrat.

Whether your issue is women's rights, voters' rights, civil rights, gun control, the environment, legislative due process, the national deficit, social security, health coverage...this election is personal.

Don't rely on a national party or any one person to get the job done. Don't wait for the Senate to stand up

with members of the House and challenge the results of the next election; make sure there's nothing to challenge. There's a lot of work to be done. If you have or know kids—yours or someone else's—who attend college in a swing state, make sure that they register there, and then make sure they vote. Follow up! If you have a second home in a swing state, offer to house campaign workers.

Register someone to vote every week. I put my kids on a camp bus every morning. The bus monitor wasn't registered; now he is! But remember, the registration is only as good as the vote. If the person doesn't vote, the registration is meaningless. So, either you or we at WCLA must remind this new voter. This is true behavior modification.

In 2001, Senator Clinton asked many different voices to join her for a press conference to show the broad range of opposition to the nomination of John Ashcroft for the position of Attorney General. Clearly our opinion did not matter to the powers that were in Washington; but they mattered to me. All these different groups with a variety of specific issues were gathered in one room for the greater good. What an amazing source of strength and power. That's exactly what we need to do now—gather together for the greater good. We don't have to be equally committed to all of the issues. We just need to keep in focus that George W. Bush is very bad for this country.

This election is very personal. Last week I went to a new doctor. During our initial conversation it became clear that he was pro-choice but anti Edwards, and thus anti Kerry. Why? Because he hated Edwards' position on Tort reform and malpractice. He clearly felt justified in his position; he was worried that Edwards, as VP, might cast a deciding vote and, thus, hurt his personal bottom line. He seemed unaware of the concept of greater good. He was not focusing on the loss of reproductive freedom that his seven-year-old daughter would experience as an adult if we have four more years; he was ignoring the economic impact the huge deficit will have on his three children in the years ahead; and he was not considering the adverse impact inadequate health insurance coverage will have on his business. It was my job—not as president of WCLA but as a voter—to bring these points to his attention. It is not always comfortable, but it is, without question, essential to have these conversations. We must all, individually and collectively, keep focused on the greater good and that we won't survive four more years.

After all, this election is personal, and *you've got to do it yourself*.

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

President: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett
Assistant: Lenore Young

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

Editor: Catherine Lederer-Plaskett

Editorial Contributors: Corinda Hanlon, Aliza Lederer-Plaskett, Jennie
Lifrieri Ries, Heather E. Ostman, Debbie Tarlow, Blake Weinberg,
Deena Weintraub, Eve Widdows

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Blurring the Lines Between Church and State — Election Year 2004

One of the fundamental tenets upon which this nation was founded was the principle of the separation of Church and State. The premise for this clear division was if no religion were permitted to interfere with governing, then no single religion could ever be in the position to dictate its values to others or to the nation at large; religious persecution would be avoided.

Since the day he took office, George W. Bush has made it a priority to undermine this constitutional canon. He has surrounded himself with likeminded individuals and together they have ruled this country according to the doctrine of their shared faith in an extremist interpretation of Christianity. Proving the worst fears of the nation's founders correct, the Bush administration has embraced and empowered those individuals and groups that practice his extreme form of Christianity while ostracizing, intimidating, and persecuting those who do not.

As president, Bush immediately

You Can Be Catholic and Pro-Choice

by Neil McCarthy

The Vatican and US Conference of Bishops have strongly criticized Catholics who are pro-choice. This is bad politics by the Church but here's something most Catholics don't know: it's also bad theology.

That's the message two professors – Daniel A. Dombrowski and Robert Deltete – offer in their book, "A Brief, Liberal, Catholic Defense of Abortion" (U. of Illinois Press, 2000).

The Church hierarchy says life (or personhood) begins at conception and that abortion is, therefore, murder. But two of the Church's premier fathers – St. Augustine and St. Thomas – didn't agree. According to them, the body

chose to reward his Christian conservative base with the establishment of a program discussed during his campaign—the faith-based initiative. With this action he threw into jeopardy one of the most important underpinnings of this country: religious freedom and the separation of Church and State. Bush derived the idea for the faith-based initiative from Catholic neo-conservatives and Marvin Olasky. (*The New York Times*, 6/12/00). In his writings, Olasky explained the outline for such an initiative, "We must place in the hands of state officials all decisions about welfare and the financing of it, and then press them to put welfare entirely in the

hands of church and community based organizations."

When the "faith-based" initiative stalled in the Senate, Bush, while attending a religious charities conference, signed an executive order that enabled faith-based groups to accept federal tax dollars while retaining their religious identities and continuing practices of hiring according to religious preference. Since then, Bush has signed executive orders creating religious-based offices in a total of 10 federal agencies. In a speech before the National Religious Broadcasters, Bush incited his audience

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I'm a Catholic

By Corinda Hanlon

When the Catholic Church asked priests not to give communion to supporters of abortion rights I was upset. I'm a Catholic and my first instincts are to trust the Church and follow its direction. However, on some issues, like this one, I think that the Church is wrong. And that is a problem.

I, like many other Catholics, am faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, I strive to be a good Catholic, to practice my religion in the way that I was taught, and to trust the Church's judgment. On the other, I have my own, perhaps more liberal, views. For example, I don't think women priests would be the end of the world, and on the question of a woman's right to choose, I believe that ultimately the woman is the best person to make decisions concerning her pregnancy.

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The Catholic Church Was My Second Home

By Jennie Lifrieri Ries

The Catholic Church was my second home. It gave me an excellent education and a great purpose for living. I loved the Mass, the hymns, the prayers, the theology. Imagine my dismay when in the 70's I heard from the altar one Sunday morning, the directions "write to your elected officials to outlaw abortions ... allow no exceptions." There I sat with three small children who desperately needed a mother and I was being instructed to risk my health and, perhaps, my life rather than terminate a pregnancy. I could not believe what I had heard.

The contradictions had begun. Having studied theology at a Catholic college, I knew that wars had been justified, that killing in self defense was allowed. Was this edict governing the sanctity of life absolute only when it pertained to women?

Further, there was the lack of consistency in the Catholic Church for treating a fetus as a person. I knew of many instances in Boston in the 50's where women who had late-term miscarriages, requested religious rites for the fetus and were denied by pastors. It was not yet a person was the reason given!

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to “rally the armies of compassion so that we can change America one heart, one soul at a time.”

This administration announced plans to provide federal housing funds for the building of structures in which religious services take place. This president has pushed to put prayer back in the classroom. While continuing to reject invitations by diverse groups such as the NAACP and the Log Cabin Republicans, Bush always finds a way to participate in Christian fundamentalist functions. In fact, he communicated via satellite with the Southern Baptist Convention; in that speech, Bush called on Congress to approve a “comprehensive” ban on cloning, saying, “Life is a creation of God, not a commodity to be exploited by man.”

Bush has courted Christian conservatives and the Roman Catholic Church throughout his presidency and his campaigns. He considers their support essential to his re-election. His recent visit to the Vatican highlights his commitment to enlisting Rome and the US Catholic Church in his campaign.

The Catholic Church is not a newcomer to politics. In Albany, the New York Catholic Conference actively lobbies on a multitude of reproductive rights issues including for the so-called unborn victims bill, and against emergency contraception and insurance coverage of contraception. Cardinal O’Connor threatened pro-choice politicians with excommunication. The Vatican and the Clinton administration had repeated confrontations over family planning, as the president continued to abolish policies instituted by Reagan and Bush I.

The difference today is the attack is on the parishioner as well as the candidate.

At first, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops discussed imposing sanctions on Roman Catholic politicians who vote contrary to church teachings on issues such as abortion. The result was that a task force was created to look into the issue. After Senator Kerry’s popularity increased and the president’s decreased, the Church intensified its scrutiny of candidates in

this election year. Church leaders such as Archbishop Myers of Newark announced that Catholic elected officials who support abortion rights should not receive Holy Communion. Bishop Burke of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, ordered priests not to give it to pro-choice candidates. A letter written by Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to Cardinal McCarrick of Washington, DC stated that Catholic pro-choice politicians must be refused the Holy Eucharist, AND a Catholic who votes for a pro-choice candidate because of her/his position on abortion can also be denied Communion.

Within days of Ratzinger’s letter, Bishop Sheridan of Colorado Springs wrote, in a pastoral letter, “Any Catholics who vote for candidates who stand for abortion, illicit stem-cell research or euthanasia suffer the same fateful consequences. It is for this reason that these Catholics, whether candidates for office or those who would vote for them, may not receive Holy Communion until they have recanted their positions and been reconciled with God and the Church in the Sacrament of Penance.” The letter was sent to each parish in the diocese which is the second largest in Colorado and has about 125,000 members. The group Americans United for Separation of Church and State has called upon the IRS to investigate the Diocese of Colorado Springs for illegal electioneering, which would nullify the church’s status as a tax-exempt entity. Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, said, “Bishop Sheridan’s letter is code language that says, ‘Re-elect Bush and vote Republican. Sheridan is using a form of religious blackmail to steer votes toward the GOP.’”

With the Vatican, Roman Catholic bishops, and Christian conservatives soundly behind him, Bush has turned his attention to forging a grassroots church-based political machine. His campaign is enlisting thousands of religious congregations around the country to distribute campaign information and to register voters.

The 2004 religious message is clear: Enlist in Bush’s religious army or risk a bad hereafter.

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This internal conflict leaves me with three choices. My first option is that I abandon my own point of view and accept the Church’s. Part of me would like to do that. I was raised to trust the Church but that means I have to give up independent thought, stop thinking for myself.

My second option is that I abandon Catholicism and turn to some other branch of Christianity. Frankly I am spiritually uncomfortable with that possibility.

My last option is that I somehow reconcile myself to being a rebel Catholic. This is the hardest option but this is the path I’ve chosen. I take comfort in recognizing that the Catholic Church has evolved over time. Once, it was common for the pope to take a wife and now it’s not. We’ve seen in recent years the fallibility of priests with numerous scandals. I console myself that the Church’s position on questions stems not just from God but also from man’s interpretation of God’s will. I’m comfortable saying that I am a good Catholic but do not agree with popes ordering crusades in

the 11th and 12th centuries. That helps me think that it’s acceptable for the congregation to debate a church mandate.

I have imagined that the time will eventually come when I will stand before Saint Peter. I will explain that I have tried to be a good Catholic and that I tried to take moral responsibility for my points of view and my actions. After all, free will is important and is an ability given to us to be used. Some of the very best parts of the Bible are about free will and how to use it. I don’t know if that will be good enough for Saint Peter, but at least I’ll be able to look him in the eye.

**Value the right
to choose.
Vote!**

March for Women's Lives: Three Generations Speak

From every state and over 60 countries, over one million people gathered together in Washington DC on Sunday, April 25 to take part in the March for Women's Lives. The predominant message of

the day: VOTE like your life depends on it, because it does.

Below are personal impressions of the March through the eyes of three different generations.

Eyes Wide Open

By Aliza Lederer-Plaskett

My name is Aliza. I am fourteen years old and I support the right a woman has to decide whether or not she will have a child. My mother, Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, runs Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion, so, naturally, women's reproductive rights is a topic of discussion in our home. On April 25, 2004, I witnessed and attended possibly the most amazing and overall, the most inspiring event of my life. I attended the March for Women's Lives!

My mother had told my dad, my brothers, and me that she wanted to attend the March, and had given us the choice of whether or not to join her. Of course, we all then felt that we absolutely had to go, and it turned into a family trip.

We drove to Washington DC on Saturday, April 24. After the long car ride, we were anxious to see where the rally would be held, so we took the Metro to the National Mall where the March would occur. We were amazed at the effort

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Deja Vu

By Debbie Tarlow

For those of us who are veterans of Marches on Washington—the 60's anti-war and civil rights marches, and the 1992 March for Choice—nothing new was expected on April 25 of this year.

What a wonderful surprise to find this event, March for Women's Lives, bigger and better than ever before.

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Count Me In!

By Corinda Hanlon

"Don't get arrested!" It seemed like everyone I told about the March in DC only had that to say to me. Whether out of humor or concern, the idea made me a bit nervous and unsure of what to expect.

My only experience with demonstrations was what I had seen in the media. Through movies, commercials, and news coverage, I witnessed police in riot gear vans lined up ready to haul protestors away. Was this going to happen here? Would I really get arrested? People were estimating a million

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Kate Michelman, arm outstretched, and a million-plus marchers.

Kate Michelman Retires

It's time to say thank you to Kate Michelman. At the end of April, she joined several other great leaders of choice, including our own Polly Rothstein, in retirement.

Michelman was president of NARAL Pro-Choice America (formerly NARAL) for 18 years. Prior to that, she was the executive director of Planned Parenthood in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Michelman has played a key role in the fight for reproductive freedom in this country. Under her leadership, NARAL Pro-Choice America has become one of this nation's most prominent reproductive rights groups.

Working in consort with other pro-choice organizations, Michelman's commitment to reproductive privacy culminated in the March for Women's Lives on April 25. Over one million people turned out that day!

Karen Hughes: Stooping to New Lows

By Blake Weinberg

In response to the March for Women's Lives at which over one million people gathered to defend reproductive freedom, the Bush administration sent Karen Hughes to CNN to lambaste pro-choice advocates. Hughes, who is counselor to the President and senior advisor to his re-election campaign, used her interview on CNN to liken the pro-choice men, women, and children who assembled at the March to the terrorists who blew up the World Trade Center and murdered 3,030 innocent people. Rather than discuss the important reproductive rights issues being raised, the president's most influential female advisor invoked the memory of 9/11 to defame pro-choice advocates and challenge the value they place on life.

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people showing up. How could something that big be peaceful?

Well, it was. From the moment I left my hotel room all I saw were marchers. Groups of people in matching T-shirts proudly displaying who they were and where they were from. I found myself smiling at and starting up conversations with complete strangers. All of us here for a common cause, I felt immediately united with them.

Walking towards the Mall the anticipation was growing. Our group was getting giddy from excitement by the amount of people we saw. As we came up over the hill next to the Capitol Building we all stopped. There are no adequate words I can use to express how I felt when I saw the Mall covered with people. There were continuous streams of people still coming in from all the side streets as well. That's when I knew I was part of history, part of something I would tell my grandchildren about. I was in DC this day, when one million people stood together and declared, "We won't go back."

Everywhere I looked there were more people. From all states, ages, and races. Throughout the day I walked around with a huge smile on my face. I feel an enormous sense of pride that I participated in something so important. I kept all the signs and stickers. Imagine keeping used stickers—but it is a day I don't want to forget, my first march. I hope after November we won't have a need for another march like this but if we ever do, count me in. So now I can go back to my friends and family and tell them what it was like to march on Washington. And for the record, I didn't get arrested! Met a few police officers though

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The beautiful spring weather only added to the warm feelings of comradery between people from just about every state in the country. There were endorsements by more than 1400 groups, including unions, religious and health care organizations, and first-time joiners like the NAACP.

A multitude of women and men of all ages proudly carried banners. Chants such as "Our bodies, our choice" rang through the air repeatedly as they made their way to the Mall. On the sidelines, anti-choice demonstrators displayed their signs, but did not resort to untoward behavior.

In this critical presidential election year, with the health and lives of so many on the line, a renewed sense of purpose and intensity filled the atmosphere. Speakers such as Senator Hillary Clinton, Gloria Steinem, Whoopi Goldberg, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, and many others gave inspiration to us all.

The March for Women's Lives united us behind the issues confronting women and children today. It showed an overwhelming desire by thoughtful people of all ages, to see a new President inaugurated in January, 2005, so that changes can take place to give women better lives in this country and throughout the world.

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attempt to limit women's reproductive freedom by banning so-called partial birth abortion (1996, 1998, and 1999 hostile amendments.) He has supported Medicaid funding for abortion services in every budget since taking office. In 2001, Klein sponsored a study of NYS HMO contraceptive coverage, *This Month's Bills or This Month's Pills*, which found that coverage was inadequate and then recommended solutions. Klein co-sponsored the Women's Health and Wellness Act of 2002. This act was a huge victory over conservative groups that tried unsuccessfully to include a major conscience loophole for employers who did not want to include contraception in their employees' drug coverage.

Kaufman—Not Pro-Choice

By contrast, Stephan Kaufman tends to favor government restrictions. Kaufman, who also ran on the Conservative Party line, voted in support of a so-called PBA ban on three different occasions. The US Supreme Court struck down an identical law which Justice Stephens wrote was "deceptively crafted, affected abortions throughout pregnancy, and was not limited to the post-viability procedure graphically described by supporters."

Kaufman's voting record shows that he wants to criminalize so-called PBA, and place government squarely between a woman and her doctor.

Regardless of what anti-choicers claims, the PBA bans signed in Washington and under consideration in Albany are neither narrow exceptions to reproductive rights nor clearly defined. They criminalize a whole range of medically recommended abortion procedures, threaten women's health, and insert government directly into the relationship between doctor and patient. The intent of such bans is not to carve out a small exception to reproductive rights, but rather to circumvent and undermine the Constitutional protections at the heart of *Roe v Wade*.

Kaufman's record also shows that he has repeatedly voted against the Sexual Orientation Nondiscrimination Act which would allow equal opportunity in the workplace, schools,

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people were making to ensure the event was a success.

The next day, we arrived an hour early for the March and found the field packed—what a stunning comparison to the quiet, empty condition of the Mall the previous day. I carried posters, screamed, and shouted with the crowd, distributed NARAL stickers and posters from several different national organizations. I even ran into the Women's Issues Club from my school (Fieldston High School).

When my family finally left the March, I left with a sense of pride, and also inspiration. I now know how important it really is to make sure that John Kerry wins this election. I now know that this country will not survive another four years of George W. Bush. I now want to help make it happen.

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International Consequences: The Global Gag Rule

By Eliot Engel

Over the last few years, the Republican-dominated federal government has continually challenged a woman's Constitutional right to a legal and safe abortion. Notably, this attack on the reproductive rights of women has not been limited to those living in the United States. Today, the right to merely learn about the full range of women's reproductive choices is being threatened by those in Congress and the White House with the so-called "Global Gag Rule." The "Global Gag Rule" is also dubbed the Mexico City Policy after the city in which it was announced by President Reagan in 1984.



American funding to keep their doors open.

The Global Gag Rule forces organizations to make the difficult decision between losing needed funding or losing the right to have honest and complete medical discussions with their patients. Many of these targeted organizations provide invaluable service to women living in desperate conditions in the poorest parts of the world. Their services are hardly ever limited to only providing abortions, and most offer women access to birth control, HIV/AIDS prevention, and education about their health and bodies.

To ensure that women in this nation and around the world continue to have the right to choose, I have cosponsored several important pieces of legislation, including The Global Democracy Promotion Act, introduced by Representative Nita Lowey. This bill would end the Mexico City Policy by prohibiting the denial of US funds to overseas groups based on the medical services they provide, and makes clear that US funds may not be used to impose restrictions on free speech that would be illegal if applied in the United States.

There can be no doubt about it—the same forces in Washington that imposed the Mexico City Policy on family planning services around the world aim to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decision of *Roe v Wade*. As a staunch supporter of a woman's Constitutional right to have a safe and legal abortion, I believe that it is essential to do everything we can to end the Mexico City Policy once and for all. Women in the United States and around the world deserve no less.

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EC: Politics over Science, Again

It seemed like a done deal: Emergency Contraception (EC) would be available without a prescription nationwide.

The approval process, begun in April 2003, was almost complete. On December 16, 2003, a joint meeting of two Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory committees had voted 23-4 to recommend that Barr Laboratories' application for the sale of Plan B (a type of EC) without a prescription should be approved.

All that was necessary was for the FDA Commissioner to make the final, official decision. As no one, including several former FDA officials, could remember an occasion when both a staff and an advisory committee recommendation had been overruled, approval appeared virtually guaranteed. Or so it seemed.

On May 6, 2004, Dr. Steven Galson, acting director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, shocked everyone by refusing to allow Plan B to be sold over-the-counter. A "nonapprovable" letter signed by Dr. Galson was sent to Barr Laboratories.

The Opposition

Despite claims by Galson to the contrary, it appears that this decision was political, rather than scientific. EC is not a part of the abstinence-only policy. The Plan B application has been opposed by conservative groups such as the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America that claim that EC

will promote sexual promiscuity; some extremists claimed that Plan B is actually an abortifacient because it stops a pregnancy from occurring.

Forty-nine House Republicans wrote Bush a letter asking him to demand the FDA reject the recommendation of the agency's own expert advisory committees. The House members claimed the FDA committees had only focused on EC's safety and effectiveness in preventing pregnancy; they failed to consider the impact that the wider availability of EC would have on the "sexual health of adolescents and young people." The letter stated, "We are concerned that adolescent exposure to sexually transmitted infection will increase because of the availability of [EC] over-the-counter. This availability will ultimately result in significant increases in cancer, infertility, and HIV/AIDS."

Critics of Galson's decision have noted that taking into account how some people's behavior might be affected by the approval of a drug is unprecedented.

Senator John Kerry, through a spokesperson, summarized the situation when he said, "The White House is putting its own political interests ahead of sound medical policies that have broad support. This White House is more interested in appealing to its electoral base than it is in protecting women's health."

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On Sunday, May 16th, ProChoice Voter kicked off its 2004 get-out-the-vote drive. Senator Clinton hosted this phenomenally successful event.

PCV is an independent federal PAC which supports candidates endorsed by Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion (WCLA.)

For more information, contact:
ProChoiceVoter@aol.com or (914) 421-0075



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In 2004:

Kerry voted NO to HR 1997: *Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004*

The *Unborn Victims of Violence Act* (UVVA), introduced in the House and Senate by Representative Melissa Hart (R-PA) and by Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) respectively, was disguised as legislation that claimed to protect pregnant women from harm, but, in reality, was merely a means of establishing fetal personhood. The legislation actually grants "an unborn child" federal protection and rights, instead of increasing penalties for harm done to the pregnant woman. UVVA in no way offers additional protection to a pregnant woman above and beyond what already existed on the books prior to this legislation. Instead, it criminalizes injury to a fetus but fails to increase the punishment against the perpetrator for injuring the woman. This legislation is a means to chip away at *Roe v Wade* and to further undermine a woman's control over her own body and pregnancy. (Go to our website www.wcla.org and look at the Summer 2003 newsletter article "Connecting the Dots" for more information.)

This bill passed and was signed into law by President Bush on April 1, 2004.

In 2003:

Kerry voted NO to S 3: *Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003*

Advocates of the ban on the so-called Partial Birth Abortion (PBA) describe it as a narrow exception to reproductive rights, intended to prevent a clearly-defined and particularly objectionable late-term procedure. Because the term "Partial Birth Abortion" is so graphic and inflammatory, some otherwise pro-choice Americans express support for a PBA ban.

In reality, the PBA ban signed into law in Washington is neither narrow nor clearly-defined. It criminalizes a whole range of medically recommended abortion procedures, threatens women's health, and inserts government directly into the relationship between doctor and patient.

PBA is not mentioned in any medical textbook. There is a medical procedure called intact dilation and extraction, or intact D & X, which is employed only when a doctor deems it to be the safest method of abortion for a particular patient. PBA bans are often assumed to be targeted at intact D & X, but their legislative language is, in every case, much more sweeping. PBA bans are opposed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Public Health Association, the American Nurses Association, and the American Medical Women's Association.

Because PBA is defined so vaguely and broadly, a ban would prohibit abortions much earlier in pregnancy. Third trimester abortions are *already* illegal in every state except to save the woman's health or life, so the PBA ban clearly has a different and much more sweeping objective. The intent of the ban is not to carve out a small exception to reproductive rights, but rather to circumvent and undermine the Constitutional protections at the heart of *Roe v Wade*.

After eight years and two Clinton vetoes, this bill was signed into law by President Bush on November 5, 2003. It is the first federal law in US history to criminalize a safe abortion procedure.

In 2000:

Kerry voted NO to S 2549: *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001*

The *National Defense Authorization Act* was a motion that anti-choicers used to block a proposed amendment that would have ended the ban on privately funded abortions at US military facilities overseas. (The anti-choice motion passed by a vote of 50-49 on June 20, 2000.) In 1999, Kerry had also voted against a similar anti-choice bill, S 1059: *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000*.

As shown by his votes in 1997 and 1998, Kerry has always supported an end to the ban on abortions funded privately in military facilities overseas.

Kerry voted YES on Amendment S 2763 to be added to S 625: *Bankruptcy Overhaul*

On Feb., 20, 2000, Kerry voted in support of Senator Charles Schumer's amendment S 2763 to S 625: *Bankruptcy Overhaul*, which would have prevented people from using bankruptcy procedures to avoid civil and criminal debts/damages resulting from FACE (Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances) violations or clinic violence incurred at abortion clinics.

In 1999:

Kerry voted NO to S 1692: *Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2000*

This bill, as described above under the year 2003, criminalized the medical procedure referred to as intact "dilation and extraction." The bill passed the Senate on October 21, 1999, and was subsequently vetoed by President Clinton.

Kerry voted YES on Amendment S 2321 to be added to S 1692.

This non-binding amendment affirmed the court's decision in *Roe v Wade* and acknowledged the right secured by the vote as constitutionally based. It was passed on Oct. 21, 1999.

In 1997:

Kerry voted NO to S 1061: *FY 1998 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations*

This proposed, anti-choice amendment prohibited funding for Parkinson's Disease research that used human fetus tissue, cells, or organs from aborted fetus. The amendment did not pass.

Kerry voted NO to Amendment S 936 to be added to S 1023: *Treasury and General Appropriations*

This amendment prohibited the use of funds to pay for an abortion or to pay for the administrative expenses in connection with certain health plans that provide coverage for abortions. This amendment passed.

See Kerry on next page

Reality

EC significantly reduces the risk of pregnancy (89%) if taken within 72 hours of unprotected sexual intercourse. It works by interrupting ovulation, preventing fertilization of an egg or stopping an egg from implanting in the uterus.

EC is available without a prescription in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Maine, New Mexico, and Washington. It is also available over-the-counter in Canada and some European countries.

In New York State, the Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act which would allow EC to be distributed by pharmacies and registered nurses through non-specific prescriptions is sponsored in the Assembly by Democrat Amy Paulin and in the Senate by Republican Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann. It has passed in the Assembly but is confronted with strong opposition in the Republican-controlled Senate.

EC without a prescription would be a win for everyone: abortion rates would go down dramatically. According to a report released by NYS Comptroller Alan Hevesi in November 2003, easier access to EC in New York State would result in 122,000 fewer unintended pregnancies and 82,000 fewer abortions, annually, with a savings of approximately \$452 million per year in health care spending in New York State alone.

Imagine what EC over-the-counter could do on a national level!

Book Review, from page 3

and soul of a fetus develops organically, and abortion never results in the death of a person until the later stages of a pregnancy.

Science and reason support this view. A fetus cannot feel anything until neural paths are sufficiently developed to transmit messages across synapses. This occurs at about the third trimester. And most fertilized eggs are never implanted in the uterus. Thus, the biggest abortionist is Nature, not any particular physician who provides abortions to many women.

So why is today's Church so opposed to abortion? Alas, as Dombrowski and Deltete point out, the answer is "politics." The view that abortion kills

Kerry voted YES to H Joint Resolution 36: *International Family Planning Funding*

This joint resolution allowed early release of funds for international family planning programs. The joint resolution approved a presidential finding that a provision of a 1996 law that delayed spending for international family planning programs until July 1, 1997 was having a negative impact on the proper functioning of the family planning program. Congressional approval allowed the release of \$385 million for international family planning programs beginning March 1st, 1997. The joint resolution was adopted.

(For more information on voting records, go to www.vote-smart.org.)

His Entire Political Career

Since his election to office in 1984, Senator Kerry has upheld a strong commitment to pro-choice legislation. His voting record shows that he has consistently supported: family planning bills for national and international programs; laws to ensure the safety of individuals who enter facilities that offer abortion services; the availability of abortion counseling at federally funded clinics; the coverage of abortion by federally-funded insurance policies; an increase

a person is of recent vintage in Church history. It developed initially in the 17th and 18th centuries, when primitive microscopes saw fetuses which appeared to be, but in fact were not, miniature persons. It reached full flower in the mid 19th century, when the Vatican lost its papal states and substituted assertions of moral authority for the absence of political power.

The Church's current position is a blend of ignored theology, bad science, and political jealousy. But Dombrowski and Deltete offer pro-choice Catholics some good news: being pro-choice is not just consistent with our politics, it's also consistent with our faith.

(Reprint from *Spring 2002 Newsletter*)

in the availability of funds for poor women who choose to obtain abortions.

Kerry has opposed: the ban on privately funded abortions at overseas military facilities; the ban on so-called partial birth abortions.

Senator Kerry has very clearly made reproductive rights a priority!

My Second Home, from page 3

And then there were the martyrs—Christians who faced the lions to prove their religious devotion. Nuns told me their heroism was not demanded; it was freely chosen. Choice was a key component in their model behavior. Shouldn't it be a part of women's as well? Why can I not choose to end a pregnancy? Why does a fetus have an unquestioned right to inhabit my body, and thereby in certain circumstances threaten my health and sometimes my life? Must I risk my life in this case to save my immortal soul? Would the Bishops who are denying Communion to pro-choice Catholics force women to confront lions to save their souls?

In Catholic schools I was also taught principles of social justice, deriving from the Gospels. The poor, the rich, the Pharisees, in particular, appear frequently. But where is abortion or contraception mentioned in these teachings? Have the Bishops become the current Pharisees? How can they claim to know God's dictum when it was never expressed? Some Bishops have stepped into this election with an obvious bias toward Republicans. That would not be possible if they actually followed Christ's life. Under the Bush Administration, tax money is being given to the rich, while millions of Americans are crying for food, medicine, or a roof over their heads. Where is the social justice? What would Jesus do? He would vote Democratic!

"Whatsoever you do for the least of my brethren, that you do unto me. When I was hungry, you gave me to eat...."

Please, Bishops, reread the Gospels.

constitutes an undue burden on a woman's right to an abortion, and decide almost 30,000 cases a year. (The Supreme Court hears less than 100 cases annually.) A Circuit Court of Appeals' decisions are as binding in its particular circuit as any Supreme Court decision.

Bush's nominations have been extensive and, in many cases, exceptionally controversial. On two occasions when he failed to secure confirmation for two of his extremist nominations, Bush chose to bypass Congress and install his nominees, Charles Pickering and William Pryor, by recess appointment to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the

Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, respectively. Both men are adamantly anti-choice. At his June 2003 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Pryor went so far as to say that he supported his earlier statement that the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision was "the worst abomination of the history of constitutional law." He has called the day the Supreme Court handed down the *Roe* decision "the day seven members of our high court ripped the Constitution and ripped out the life of millions of unborn children."

Below are just a smattering of the actions for which G.W. Bush and his administration will be remembered:

*Limiting funding for stem cell research by restricting research to 78 existing stem cell lines, of which researchers claim that at most there are only 19 usable lines.

*Closing the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

*Proposing a budget that sought to eliminate contraception coverage for federal employees, cut Maternal and Child Health Block Grants, and freeze money for Healthy Start programs.

*Forcing Congress to remove from the 2003 military spending bill a provision which would have allowed military personnel to obtain privately funded abortions at overseas military bases.

*Substantially increasing funding for abstinence-only sex education.

*Proposing in the FY 2005 budget that funding be available exclusively for "abstinence only" sex education, and freezing funds for Title X, a family planning program.

*Removing scientific information from government websites. Fact sheets on how the use of condoms protects against AIDS, how abortion does not increase the risk of breast cancer, and how to run programs proven to reduce teenage sexual activity were all expunged without notice or explanation.

*Rejecting Barr Laboratories' application to make Plan B, an emergency contraception, available over-the-counter, despite the overwhelmingly positive recommendations of the FDA's own advisory committees.

*Earmarking 1.5 billion dollars to promote marriage. The plan to encourage poor people, particularly women, to marry might include, as did a 2003 House welfare re-authorization bill, giving single people on welfare cash bonuses if they married.

Bush's plethora of anti-choice nominees was not limited to the bench. His nominations and/or appointments include:

*Patricia Funderburk Ware, an "abstinence only" supporter, to head the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA);

*Dr. Freda McKissic Bush, an extreme "abstinence only" advocate, to head the CDC Advisory Committee on HIV and STD prevention;

*Louise Oliver, former president of Harvard Law School's Society for Law, Life and Religion, as special assistant to the US State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. The Harvard group is dedicated to defending the "sanctity of life from conception to natural death."

*Dr. Alma Golden, a longtime "abstinence-only" proponent, was named Deputy Assistant Secretary of Population Affairs. She is to oversee Title X, a federal family planning program under the Public Health Service Act, signed into law by President Nixon in 1970;

*Anti-choice Senator Bill Frist (R-TN) was supported by Bush to replace Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) as Senate Majority Leader;

*Former Representatives Tom Coburn and Joe McIlhaney, both staunch supporters of "abstinence-only" and opponents of condom use, to be co-chair and a member, respectively, of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

*W. David Hager to be a member and chair of the Food and Drug Administration's Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee. Dr. Hager is an opponent of abortion, RU-486, and emergency contraception who advocates abstinence-only, refuses to insert IUDs, refuses to prescribe birth control to single women and has said the birth control pill causes abortions. Hager published a book entitled "As Jesus Cared for Women" and wrote, with his wife, "Stress and the Woman's Body," which recommends Scripture reading for headaches, eating disorders, and PMS. Bush had wanted Hager to be chair but withdrew his nomination after strong public outcry. He appointed him a member, and then reappointed Hager to the Committee on June 29, 2004. The FDA eventually appointed 11 doctors to its Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee. In addition to Hager, the list includes Drs. Joseph B. Stanford and Susan A. Crockett, who refuse to prescribe contraceptives of any sort.

Bush's Attack on Women around the World:

*In May 2002, a US delegation, led by Tommy Thompson, insisted that the United Nations Special Session on Children delete any reference to "reproductive health care" in its final agreement and tried to force the UN body to endorse abstinence-only sex education as the best way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and/or unintended pregnancies.

*In July 2002, Bush refused to allow release of \$34 million already appropriated by Congress to UNFPA.

*In August 2002, Bush retracted his earlier promise to provide \$2.5 million in emergency funds for Afghan women.

*Bush blocked release of \$90 million for Afghan women and \$200 million for HIV/AIDS.

*Bush froze \$3 million in funding to the World Health Organization's reproductive health program because they had allegedly researched the "morning after pill."

*Bush representatives to the UN population conference in Bangkok took the position that the US "supports the sanctity of life from conception to natural death." The delegation then moved to delete from the agreement previously adopted in Cairo the phrases "reproductive rights" and "reproductive health services." Instead the US delegation pressed to have language promoting "natural" family planning inserted. In a rare display of unanimity, the US proposals were voted down 31-1 and 32-1.

* Expanded the global gag rule to include all programs funded by the State Department.

Direct Legislative Attacks:

Bush has used anti-choice legislation as a tool to rally his base of fundamentalist extremists. Whenever his numbers have fallen in the polls, Bush has fanned the fires with a new battle cry, "Born Alive Infants Protection Act," "Partial Birth Abortion Ban," "Constitutional Amendment Against Same-Sex Marriage," and his troops come running.

*Bush signed the so-called Born Alive Infants Protection Act which ensures federal rights for all human fetuses that are born alive, including live births that occur during an attempted abortion procedure. The rights granted under this legislation already exist under federal law.

*The US Department of Justice filed an amicus brief in US Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit arguing in favor of an Ohio law which had been declared unconstitutional because it banned so-called "partial birth" abortion without an exception for protecting a woman's health.

*The Child Custody Protection Act was introduced to the House and Senate. The bill prohibits minors from crossing state lines for an abortion, except if a minor's home state's requirements for parental participation have been fulfilled.

*The Abortion Non-Discrimination Act was introduced to the House and Senate. The act disallows federal, state, or local governments from "discriminating against any health care entity because the entity refuses to provide coverage of, or pay for, induced abortions."

*Signed the so-called Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 into law on November 5, 2003. It is the first federal law in U.S. history to criminalize a safe abortion procedure.

*Signed so-called Unborn Victims of Violence Act into law on April 1, 2004. The bill, which redefines a fetus as an "unborn child," criminalizes the act of harming a fetus by assault upon a pregnant woman.

*The Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act of 2004 was introduced in the House and Senate. The full title of this act is: "A bill to ensure that women seeking an abortion are fully informed regarding the pain experienced by their unborn child."

Redefining a zygote as an "unborn child":

*Proposing regulations designating "unborn children" and fetuses as eligible for coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) but not the pregnant woman.

*Announcing the availability of applications and financial assistance for embryo "adoption."

*Issuing final regulations granting a fetus health care coverage under SCHIP. No coverage granted to the pregnant woman.

*Issuing 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.

Klein, from page 6

housing, etc. It passed without his support.

In a May 27, 2004 Journal News article reporting the Republican endorsement of Kaufman, it is stated that, "He won the endorsement despite a handful of complaints that the party should not be backing a non-Republican for the seat." There is speculation that the acceptance of Kaufman's candidacy by the Republican Party is because his stance on these two issues mirrors that of the National Republican Platform.

This is Important!

Roe v Wade is hanging by a thread in Washington. The anti-choice judicial appointments already made to the Circuit Courts of Appeal and the anticipated ones to be made to the Supreme Court could very well further weaken Roe, and probably place a woman's right to choose back in the hands of state legislatures. It is essential that candidates for state offices are strongly committed to choice.

"Jeff understands that being pro-choice means trusting women and their doctors to make the right decisions," said Lederer-Plas-kett. "Jeff Klein is the only reliable pro-choice candidate in this race."

(Senate District 34 includes parts of: the Town of Eastchester, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Pelham, Yonkers, and the Bronx.)

**ACTION
ALERT!
ACTION
ALERT!**

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

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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

U.S. Senate

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

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton [-] D,L,W
212/688-6262; 202/224-4451
Senator@clinton.senate.gov
Hon. Charles E. Schumer [-] D,L,I
212/486-4430; 202/224-6542
Senator@schumer.senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives

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

CD 17 Eliot Engel [-] D,L
718/796-9700; 202/225-2464
www.house.gov/writerep
CD 18 Nita Lowey [-] D
914/428-1707; 202/225-6506
nita.lowey@mail.house.gov
CD 19 Sue Kelly [+/-] R,C
914/241-6340; 202/225-5441
dearsue@mail.house.gov

Governor

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

NYS Senate

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

SD 34 VACANT

SD 35 Nicholas Spano [-] R,C, I ◇
914/969-5194; 518/455-2231
spano@senate.state.ny.us
SD 36 Ruth Hassell-Thompson [-] D
518/455-2061
hassellt@senate.state.ny.us
SD 37 Suzi Oppenheimer [-] D, W
914/934-5250; 518/455-2031
oppenhei@senate.state.ny.us
SD 40 Vincent Leibell [-] R,C,I
845/279-3773; 518/455-3111
leibell@senate.state.ny.us

Majority Leader Joseph Bruno [-] R,C, I
518/455-3191
bruno@senate.state.ny.us
Health Committee Chair
Kemp Hannon [-] R,C, I
518/455-2200
hannon@senate.state.ny.us

NYS Assembly

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

AD 87 Gary Pretlow [-] D, I, W
914/667-0127; 518/455-5291
pretloj@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 88 Amy Paulin [-] D,W, I
914/723-1115; 518/455-5585
paulina@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 89 Adam T. Bradley [-] D, I, W
914/686-7335; 518/455-5397
bradlea@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 90 Sandra Galef [-] D, I, W
914/941-1111; 518/455-5348
galefs@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 91 Ronald Tocci [-] R, C, I, W
914/235-7900; 518/455-4897
toccir@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 92 Richard Brodsky [-] D, I, W
914/345-0432; 518/455-5753
brodskr@assembly.state.ny.us
AD 93 Michael Spano [-] R,C, I, W
914/779-8805; 518/455-3662
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

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

County Executive

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

Westchester Board of Legislators

Hon. _____
Michaelian Office Building
White Plains, New York 10601
Switchboard 995-2800
CBL 1 George Oros [-] R,C ◇
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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.

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Rewriting History

The days of nostalgia and sorrow that followed President Ronald Reagan's death unleashed a full-blown rewrite of contemporary American history. For many people in this country, Ronald Reagan was not a hero. He was a man who chose to turn a blind eye to those problems, people, or things that he could not "white-wash" away.

The Reagan legacy is far from limited to the Iran-Contra scandal and an out-of-control deficit. This was the man who convinced the Republican party to include anti-choice language in its 1980 party platform. Under his direction, the Republican platform pledged to appoint only federal judges opposed to abortion. He supported a constitutional amendment banning abortion even for rape and incest. He forced the Republican party to abandon their endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment, after ten presidential campaigns, because he opposed it. He was the originator of the Global Gag Rule, also known as the Mexico City Policy. (See Engel, page 7) He proposed regulations that would have crippled the Title X family planning program. And the list goes on.

Reagan's commitment to turning back the clock on civil rights was not limited to women. People of color were in his crosshairs, too. This was the man who chose to begin his campaign for the Presidency in 1980 in Philadelphia, Mississippi, a town whose only claim to fame was the 1964 murder of three civil rights workers; the focus of Reagan's prepared speech was 'state's rights,' which was the longstanding code phrase for permitting segregation and rolling back civil rights gains. Reagan supported tax exemptions for schools that discriminated openly against blacks; and Reagan was the man—our president—who opposed sanctions against South Africa during the height of apartheid; he even denied that apartheid was racist.

He was not a star for many. However, ironically, Ronald Reagan does leave a true humanitarian legacy behind in the form of his wife Nancy's fight for stem cell research. Nancy Reagan has become a champion of a cause that has the potential to help so many people. Not only has she become a star fundraiser for the cause but she has taken on the Bush White House. She has said that she will not attend the Republican Convention unless she is given the opportunity to speak on the importance of stem cell research. And for that, Mrs. Reagan, we thank you.

Planned Parenthood Clinic Under Attack

By Blake Weinberg

Anti-choice activist Chris Danze used economic intimidation as his weapon of choice to stop Planned Parenthood from building a clinic in Austin, a liberal college town in Texas. Danze threatened to blacklist contractors, material suppliers, and workers who helped to construct the clinic. By early November, Danze and abortion opponents had flooded about 750 local construction firms with threatening calls, e-mails, and letters, and succeeded in getting the general contractor to quit the job.

Since then, Planned Parenthood of the Texas Capital Region has named itself general contractor. Glenda Parks, chief executive of Planned Parenthood of the Texas Capital Region, says her office has received many calls from supporters and contractors willing to work on the clinic—some for no charge.

This clinic, which will be the fourth in Austin, is the first facility in the region to offer abortion services, as well as other health care services, to poor and uninsured women.

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PLEASE SAVE OR RECYCLE.

Lest We Forget

I very strongly favor the right to be able to have a legal abortion. I do not look kindly on abortion. I can't imagine very many who do. It is a sad thing.

Abortion will go on, legal or not. The difference is a clean sanitary facility with a reputable staff to care for you or a dirty room, unsanitary facilities, and a criminal to do the surgery.

I know as I have had both—in a hospital with good care and by a drooling 90-year-old man in a filthy suit and a dirty bed. As he was working on me without anything for pain, he said, "Doesn't feel as good as a big peter does it?"

I also have a girlfriend who died from an abortion on a dirty old mat in a filthy room, her abortion done by a filthy old hag.

Desperate people will do anything.

Please keep abortion legal.

(From *In Our Own Words... Collected Recollections in Honor of Roe v. Wade*, edited by Elizabeth Lake in collaboration with Washington NARAL, Peanut Butter Publishing, 1998)

Nightmares of Today

Amy was a streetwise 17-year-old mother from West Philadelphia. She had been living with her grandmother for the last three years because her mother was in prison, but their relationship was strained. Her toddler lived with his other grandmother. When she became pregnant again, Amy knew that she could not get an abortion with her medical card. She had no way of raising hundreds of dollars for an abortion. In desperation, Amy drank a bottle of rubbing alcohol, thinking it would cause a miscarriage. She was taken to the burn unit of a nearby hospital. While still in intensive care, Amy said that she would try again to self-abort as soon as she got out of the hospital, and would do whatever it took, no matter how self-destructive. Although privately sympathetic, no doctor at the Catholic hospital would sign her to have an abortion under Pennsylvania's "life-threat" exception to the Medicaid abortion ban. A nurse on the night shift put her in touch with the Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund, which paid the full fee for Amy's early abortion.

(From *Legal but Out of Reach: Experiences from the National Network of Abortion Funds*, by the National Network of Abortion Funds, 1997)

Don't miss pro-choice advocate Eliot Engel's article *International Consequences: The Global Gag Rule* on page 7.

Be sure to vote for Engel in the primary on Sept. 14!

E-mail users: We would like to contact you. We won't inundate you, but we send interesting items from time to time and it saves us money on thank-you notes for contributions. Please e-mail us at WCLA@WCLA.org. Include your name and, if you can, the 5- or 6-digit code on the left of the line above your name on the mailing label.

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