

Summer of Choice: What We Learned in Germantown

When Operation Rescue declared a "Summer of Mercy 2.0" outside the Germantown, Md., clinic of Dr. LeRoy Carhart, NOW made a commitment to stand proudly and peacefully for women's fundamental right to choose abortion.

The first "Summer of Mercy" took place in 1991, when Operation Rescue shut down the late Dr. George Tiller's clinic in Wichita, Kan., for weeks on end. As a friend from Kansas recently told me, "It was hell."

Scott Roeder, the man convicted of murdering Tiller in 2009, explained during his trial that while he did not attend that original Summer of Mercy, it did make him "more aware" of Dr. Tiller.

For these reasons and many more, reproductive justice activists around the country took Operation Rescue's threatened actions in Germantown very seriously. Grassroots activists and organizations poured our time, resources and hearts into supporting a "Summer Celebration of Choice" from July 31 to Aug. 8.

From 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (or later) every day,



NOW leaders and activists joined with reproductive rights allies to form a peaceful presence outside the Germantown, Md., clinic of Dr. LeRoy Carhart, which was the target of anti-abortion extremists this summer.

activists from 18 states stood out in 100-degree heat, intense pouring rain and everything in between to support Dr. Carhart, his excellent staff and the women they serve with dignity, compassion and respect. At many points during

those nine days we outnumbered the antis. There was no violence, the clinic stayed open, and we did a great job representing the pro-choice majority in this country in the face of an onslaught of misinformation, lies and hatred.

Here are a few lessons made obvious during the Summer Celebration of Choice:

1. The so-called "pro-life" movement is explicitly, or at least implicitly, encouraging the killing of abortion providers. From the gentleman spotted wandering around the clinic several days mumbling about a gun, to the "truth truck" with Dr. Carhart's and Dr. Tiller's pictures driving around the immediate area, to the offer of \$35,000 for anyone with "information" about Dr. Carhart, to the exploding gun chucked on the sidewalk outside the office complex, not once did we see leaders of Operation Rescue disavow the violent images, words and actions.

2. Keeping up a peaceful pro-choice presence

See **CHOICE**, p.6, col.3

Elections: Women's Rights Hang in the Balance

The 2011 special elections and the 2012 elections provide crucial opportunities to replenish Congress with women's rights supporters who will fight back against this year's relentless attacks on women.

Special Election Victories in 2011

NOW is celebrating two recent special election victories by NOW/PAC-endorsed candidates Kathy Hochul (D-N.Y.) and Janice Hahn (D-Calif.), with thanks to NOW phoners from across the country and the tireless efforts of NOW leaders in Rochester and California.

Kathy Hochul won the May 24 special election in New York's 26th Congressional District. The race for this congressional seat, in a historically Republican district, centered on the controversial Ryan budget, which passed in the House but was defeated in the Senate.

Hochul adamantly opposed plans outlined in the Ryan budget that: convert Medicare to a private voucher system; put future Social Security cuts on a fast track; and slash Medicaid, family planning, job training and other programs that disproportionately serve and employ women. Let's hope the positive voter response to Hochul's message serves as

a lesson for other candidates and a harbinger of the 2012 elections.

Former Los Angeles Council member Janice Hahn resoundingly defeated Tea Party darling Craig Huey (R) in a run-off special election in California's 36th District on July 12. The run-off followed a May 17 special election primary for the seat vacated by retiring Rep. Jane Harman.

Huey, an extremist who opposes LGBT rights and abortion in all cases, also relentlessly argued for ever larger tax breaks for corporations and multimillionaires -- paid for with spending cuts devastating to women and families.

In contrast, Hahn confirmed her status as a champion for women and girls by voting against the harmful debt ceiling bill that Congress passed just before the August recess.

NOW/PAC has also endorsed Suzanne Bonamici (D) in the special election to fill the open seat in Oregon's first congressional district. The crowded primary will be Nov. 8, with the general election on Jan. 13, 2012. Bonamici served three terms in the Oregon State Legislature, rising to assistant majority leader in the State Senate. A strong leader on women's issues, Bonamici would be the only woman in Oregon's congressional delegation.

2012 Races to Watch

NOW/PAC has endorsed two women for open seats in the Senate. Representative Shelley Berkley is running for the seat left open by Sen. John Ensign. In Connecticut, former State Representative and Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz is running for the seat that will be open with Sen. Joe Lieberman retiring.

Senators previously endorsed by NOW/PAC and up for reelection in 2012 include Democrats Sherrod Brown (Ohio), Maria Cantwell (Wash.), Diane Feinstein (Calif.), Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.), Robert Menendez (N.J.), Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) and Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.). NOW/PAC is determined to help reelect these candidates so they can return to the Senate to defend against attacks on women.

In the house, NOW/PAC has endorsed long-time NOW member Lois Frankel (D) in the 2012 fight for Florida's 22nd Congressional District seat. Frankel, former mayor of West Palm Beach, also served 14 years in the Florida House of Representatives, where she rose to the position of Minority Leader.

Frankel is challenging Republican Allen West, a Tea Party favorite who referred to those

See **ELECTIONS**, p.6, col.2

Deficit Cuts Threaten Women's Economic Security

NOW has worked for decades to improve women's economic security. At the same time, the right wing has consistently targeted programs that keep millions of women from falling into poverty -- programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, family planning, job training and more. Since the 2010 midterm elections, NOW has had to work overtime just to keep these and other vital social programs intact.

Sadly, the country is about to take a wrong turn -- pushed down a path of destructive economic policy charted by Tea Party extremists, who seem largely in control of the House of Representatives. With the increase in the federal debt ceiling on the line, House conservatives bullied their way to a lopsided agreement with the White House and its allies in Congress. The debt deal reduces federal expenditures by nearly \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, with no tax increases on the highest income earners.

The debt-ceiling deal places nearly all the burden of deficit reduction on the backs of middle- and low-income families, even though they are least able to afford it and least at fault for the debt and deficit to begin with. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, the primary drivers of the debt and deficit are the Bush-era tax cuts for the wealthiest, two unpaid-for wars, and reduced federal tax revenues caused by high unemployment, which itself resulted from now-notorious unregulated shenanigans in the financial industry.

The debt deal also created a "super committee" of 12 members of Congress, equally divided



Left to right: Institute for Women's Policy Research President Heidi Hartmann and NOW President Terry O'Neill present House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi with petitions calling on Congress to protect women's economic security.

by party, to produce a plan by late November that would further reduce the federal deficit.

Unfortunately, the super committee is unlikely to come up with what women and their families need: a long-term plan for shared prosperity that includes requiring corporations and the wealthiest to pay their fair share of taxes, shifting federal spending from military to socially productive efforts, pushing health care costs down by moving toward a single-payer system, and a jobs program with livable wages and equal pay.

NOW has advocated all along that we need jobs, not cuts. Joblessness has been a particular problem for women in the current anemic economic recovery. In fact, since the recov-

ery began in 2009, women have actually *lost* more than 280,000 jobs, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the National Women's Law Center. On average, women regained less than one in 10 of the jobs they lost in the Great Recession, while men recovered nearly three in 10 jobs lost.

African-American women have fared even worse, losing more jobs than black men since the beginning of the recession and continuing to lose jobs throughout the recovery. Because women are over-represented in public sector jobs, state and local government cutbacks have disproportionately affected them. But women are also losing out in private sector jobs, where men appear to be taking many of the recovering jobs formerly held by women.

As the super committee's November deadline approaches, and the 2012 campaign season intensifies, feminists must stand stronger than ever. Opportunities to achieve our goals -- including equal pay, affordable child care, better funding for the Violence Against Women Act, universal access to abortion, birth care, prenatal care, and all other aspects of reproductive health care, economically-secure retirement, improved support for persons with disabilities, educational equity for women and girls -- all of these are on the line.

NOW has been at the forefront in responding to what is rightly called a war against women. Our leaders and activists have raised the alarm online and in the streets by: sharing information through webinars, blogs and other social media; demonstrating and rallying; meeting with elected officials; sending petitions by the thousands; holding press conferences; and campaigning for candidates who champion our issues. We won't stop, and we won't go back. We will do whatever it takes to put into place policies that allow all women to thrive in healthy, vibrant communities. You can be a part of this important effort: Sign up for NOW's action alerts at www.now.org/lists.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell Victory, At Last

On Sept. 20, 2011, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policy will be history, and lesbians, gay men and bisexuals will, after 18 long years, be able to serve openly in the military -- finally!

Repeal followed a riveting hearing held last year by the Senate Armed Services Committee, which included testimony about the nearly year-long Pentagon study that found repeal of DADT would not risk military readiness.

The congressional bill to repeal DADT was passed in December 2010, but the policy remained in place until the president, secretary of Defense and chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certified that repeal would not harm military readiness. All that remains is a 60-day waiting period following the July 22 certification.

NOW has long been concerned about the disproportionate impact DADT has on women. According to the Service Women's Action Network, sexual harassment of military women frequently takes the form of lesbian baiting. An indication of the lopsided impact of the policy is that, in 2008, 34 percent of the service members discharged were women, even though

women constitute only 15 percent of military personnel.

Since 1993, when DADT was passed, more than 14,500 lesbians, gay men and bisexuals have been discharged. That's more than 14,500 trained service members who put their lives on the line to serve this country, but whose careers were unjustly cut short. An estimated 66,000 more lived in fear that they would be found out and discharged next.

Even prior to DADT, NOW worked against this discrimination, making note of it in a 1977 resolution on lesbian rights and continuing throughout the 1980s to bring attention to the issue. In 1991, NOW called for a National Day of Action against the Department of Defense policy of excluding lesbians and gay men from the military. In 1993, NOW organized "Lift the Ban" protests, which included former NOW President Patricia Ireland being arrested during a protest at the White House. NOW's efforts continued through last year's numerous action alerts, lobbying and demonstrations as part of the final push to achieve this landmark victory.

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Birth Control Coverage Victory May Come with a Catch

In early August, NOW commended the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for issuing new guidelines for insurance plans to cover women's preventive health services under the Affordable Care Act. Included among these guidelines, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine, are well-woman visits, support for breastfeeding equipment, domestic violence screening and the provision of contraceptive services without co-pays or deductibles.

In a letter to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, NOW had called for the full adoption of these recommendations, stating that significant progress could be made toward "reducing health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minorities, expanding access for young women and those with moderate incomes as well as generally improving the health status of women and their infants." NOW also urged the department to exclude refusal or conscience clauses that would undermine women's access to birth control.

Unfortunately, the regulations do allow religious institutions the option of not covering

contraception services when offering insurance to their employees. HHS noted that "this is the most common accommodation for churches available in a majority of the 28 states that already require insurance companies to cover contraception."

NOW President Terry O'Neill objected that no woman should be denied health care as basic as contraception, not even a woman who happens to work for a religious institution.

"The U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and freedom from being forced to observe any particular religious dictate," said O'Neill. "This so-called conscience clause is bad enough -- but even worse, we've heard that a more expansive refusal clause may be included in the final regulation. That's unacceptable. It would be a tragedy if millions of women were denied affordable access to contraception because HHS is ready to give in to a tiny minority of religious extremists who oppose birth control."

A comment period is currently in effect until Sept. 17. NOW will submit comments reminding HHS that an increasing number of health

care refusals are undermining medical standards of care and patient health and safety.

"The progress set into motion by these new regulations must not be compromised by ideologically driven loopholes," said O'Neill.

O'Neill also expressed disappointment that HHS will not require insurers to implement this change immediately, allowing them to wait a full year before providing women's preventive services without co-pays or deductibles.

"There is no good reason for further delay," O'Neill said. "Women need preventive health services now, especially as they are economically squeezed by unemployment or underemployment."

Momentum Growing for Equal Marriage

After more than 15 years of advocacy for equal marriage, NOW is finally seeing increased momentum to repeal the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which prohibits the U.S. government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

While same-sex couples can now legally marry in six states and the District of Columbia, DOMA singles them out for discriminatory treatment, thereby denying them more than 1,100 federal spousal and survivor benefits, such as filing joint tax returns, receiving spousal benefits under Social Security, or taking unpaid leave to care for a spouse.

The Respect for Marriage Act, which would repeal DOMA, was originally introduced by Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) in 2009 with NOW by his side. This year the bill (H.R. 116) was again introduced by Nadler, and a Senate version (S. 598) was introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.). The House bill currently has 120 sponsors, and the Senate bill has 28 sponsors.

On July 20, the Senate Judiciary Committee held the first congressional hearing on the repeal of DOMA, which included heartbreaking stories of the harm caused to real people by DOMA. People like Lynda, who was denied time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act to care for Raquel, her married spouse in Vermont, who suffers from degenerative arthritis. And Ron, married in California, whose income decreased by 70 percent when his partner died and he couldn't get the Social Security survivor's benefit that would have allowed him to stay in their family home.

DOMA undermines the very purpose of programs like Social Security and the Family and Medical Leave Act by making it more difficult for families to provide mutual support. The Respect for Marriage Act ensures that all valid marriages are respected under federal law. We need to keep the momentum going, add more co-sponsors and get it passed.

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Billboards Targeting Women of Color Met with Resistance, Reality

Reproductive justice advocates are standing up to efforts to demonize and shame women of color who utilize their legal right to abortion.

Thanks to widespread public outrage, including organized efforts by the Women of Color Policy Network and the Trust Black Women Partnership, an inflammatory billboard lasted just two days in New York City. Paid for by the anti-reproductive rights group Life Always, the billboard showed a young African-American girl with a startling message above her head: "The most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb."

The three-story tall advertisement was scheduled to hang on a building for three weeks, but the company that sold Life Always the space agreed to take it down within days of its unveiling in February.

Trust Black Women spread the word on Facebook that the ad was "offensive, racist, sexist and -- most of all -- disrespectful of our decision making, our 400-year history of raising and caring for black children, and our human right to make health care choices for ourselves."

This billboard was part of a larger strategy that deliberately ignores the underlying economic issues associated with abortion while capitalizing on the history of racism in the U.S.

In Los Angeles, Latinas were targeted with a similar bilingual billboard stating: "The most

dangerous place for a Latino is in the womb."

Last year, billboards in Atlanta declared that "black children are an endangered species." They were followed this June by the message: "The 13th Amendment Freed Us. Abortion Enslaves Us."

A Chicago billboard included a photo of Barack Obama alongside text that said, "Every 21 minutes our next possible leader is aborted."

Legislative efforts to limit access to all forms of family planning often target low-income women, a disproportionate number of whom are women of color. This lack of access to contraception can and does result in unplanned pregnancies.

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health states: "Studies show that African American women and Latinas are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured and often lack basic access to birth control and comprehensive sex education due to fundamental structural inequities in society."

As feminists work to defeat the radical right's war on women, it is critical to recognize that women of color are often the first and most affected by attacks on reproductive justice and to work to uproot those fundamental structural inequities. NOW's commitment to combating racism and securing equality for all demands nothing less.

NOW Conference: Action, Inspiration and Connection

NOW held its 2011 National Conference in sunny Tampa, Fla., June 24-26. Hundreds of feminists from around the country gathered to share ideas and strategize to stop the ongoing war on women by the right wing in Congress. The conference theme, *Daring to Dream: Building a Feminist Future*, challenged activists to create a feminist blueprint for the world.

The conference kicked off with an emergency rally outside of Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) office, located right next door to the conference hotel. Rubio, a Tea Party favorite, voted for a proposed GOP budget that would cut or destroy programs critical to women. Conference attendees marched outside in extreme heat to send a message to the senator: "Hands off Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare," and "Women need jobs, not cuts."

The rally helped enthuse and engage participants for the inspiring and motivating weekend ahead. They had the opportunity to engage in 35 workshops covering a variety of topics, including single-payer health care, the intersection of eco-feminism and racial justice, creating a positive abortion rights narrative, and Islam and women's rights. The workshops also included a political track and an organizing track for attendees who wanted more in-depth information and skill building in these areas.

The general sessions included a number of superb speakers and honorees from all walks of life. Among them were Dr. Nancy Klimas, who received NOW Foundation's Victoria J. Mastrobuono Women's Health Award. Klimas is a professor of Medicine, Psychology, and Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She has pioneered research on chronic fatigue syndrome and has worked on behalf of women and women's health care for more than a quarter of a century.

Olga Vives, former NOW executive vice president and action vice president, was honored with a Woman of Action award. During her tenure at the National NOW Action Center, Vives took the lead on major events and issues, such as naming Wal-Mart a Merchant of Shame, advocating for equal marriage, promoting justice for immigrant women, and helping lead the historic 2004 March for Women's Lives, which brought more than one million abortion rights supporters to Washington, D.C.

NOW also recognized Sonia Pressman Fuentes, a founder of NOW and longtime women's rights advocate. Fuentes is the author of "Eat First, You Don't Know What They'll Give You, the Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter."

One of the foremost advocates of gender equality in education, Nancy Hogshead-Makar, was named a Woman of Courage honoree. She currently teaches sports law courses at the Florida Coastal School of Law and co-authored the acclaimed book "Equal Play, Title IX and Social Change."

NOW was also pleased to present Girls Incorporated of Pinellas, Fla., with the first-ever Girl-Powered Media Award for their outstand-

ing documentary, *Being Safe In Our World*. Girls Inc. is a nonprofit organization that inspires girls to reach their full potential. This particular group of girls produced a video about a sexually exploitative billboard in their town as part of a summer camp media program when they were nine and 10 years old. Response to the video was overwhelmingly positive, and it sparked an important discussion in the community.

An exciting line-up of speakers, from the esteemed and hilarious Patricia Schroeder to the fiery Dr. Maya Rockey Moore, guaranteed that each plenary session was a one of a kind experience.

Of course, networking and connecting with other feminists is always a key element of the NOW conference. This year, attendees of all ages cut loose with a wildly successful dance party on Saturday night.

The final day of the conference was filled



A group from Girls Inc. of Pinellas, Fla., accepted NOW's first-ever Girl-Powered Media Award for their documentary, *Being Safe in Our World*, at the 2011 National NOW Conference in Tampa this June.

with debate and voting on resolutions, which are the guiding force behind NOW and form the basis of the organization's policy. Some of the resolutions passed this year include pressing for reproductive civil rights legislation, using Title IX action networks to help end sex discrimination in education, and ensuring inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the U.S. Department of State programming.

Speaker videos, photos and resolutions can be found at: www.now.org/conference.

Positive Step in Effort to Prevent, Address Sexual Assault on Campus

The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights released a guidance letter to schools, colleges and universities, reminding them of their responsibilities under Title IX to prevent and address sexual violence. NOW cheered this new initiative, which was introduced by Vice President Joe Biden in April.

Schools are encouraged to address the topic of sexual violence in orientation programs for new students, faculty, employees, residence hall advisors, coaches and student athletes and at assemblies or "back-to-school nights."

The letter emphasizes that Title IX coordinators must be trained on how to properly report and respond to allegations of sexual harassment and violence. It also stresses that grievance or disciplinary procedures should not cause any undue delay and should work not only to eliminate the immediate problem, but also to prevent its recurrence.

Perhaps most importantly for complainants of sexual violence or harassment on school campuses, the letter offers two important clarifications. First, it spells out the remedies that schools should be prepared to offer students once a complaint has been made. These include (but are not limited to) having the opportunity to switch classes or residence situations, counseling or medical services, and the provision of an escort to protect against retaliation.

Secondly, the Department of Education clari-

fied the burden of proof by which schools should judge allegations of sexual violence. Some schools use the standard of "clear and convincing evidence," which requires that adjudicators be convinced that it was reasonably certain (or highly probable) that sexual harassment or violence occurred. However, the Department of Education clarified that this standard is not in line with Title IX, and the correct standard of proof for violations of civil rights laws is the "preponderance of the evidence" standard, which asks if it was more likely than not that sexual harassment or violence occurred.

Finally, the Department of Education clarified that while it might be in the school's best interest, mediation between a victim and the alleged perpetrator is never appropriate for complaints of sexual assault, even on a voluntary basis. NOW, on its own and with the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, has been working tirelessly on Title IX since its adoption and strongly supports the guidelines from the Department of Education.

These clarifications are an important step in helping our nation's educational institutions become environments free from sexual violence, harassment and discrimination. With nearly 4,000 incidents of sexual battery, 800 rapes and attempted rapes and 3,300 forcible sex offenses reported on school campuses over the past four years, it is none too soon.

NOW Urges More Funding for Anti-Violence Programs; U.N. Report Finds U.S. Programs Lacking

NOW President Terry O'Neill submitted written testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee in July, calling for greatly increased funding for Violence Against Women Act programs. The appeal was backed up by data from an annual census, which documented that a significant number of requests for service in 2010 were unmet due to critical staff and funding shortages. In fact, in a one-day snapshot taken by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 1,746 responding programs reported 9,541 requests for help went unmet. This translates to a yearly estimate of up to 3.5 million survivors of violence being turned away for lack of resources.

O'Neill credited the groundbreaking 1994 act with having "saved thousands of lives, prevented untold injury and anguish and served to educate a generation about the tragic consequences of family violence," but said that "our work to effectively prevent violence and assist survivors must be taken to a higher level."

NOW went on to call to the committee's attention a set of recommendations developed by Hon. Rashida Manjoo, the United Nations special rapporteur on Violence Against Women, following a two-week fact finding mission to the U.S. These recommendations include specific research, legislative, policy and programmatic improvements that would positively impact survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, as well as measures addressing military violence, women in detention and violence against Native American women.

Manjoo's report, previewed at an early June

meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, found that "the lack of substantive protective legislation at federal and state levels, and the inadequate implementation of current laws, policies and programs, has resulted in the continued prevalence of violence against women and the discriminatory treatment of victims, with particularly detrimental effects on poor, minority and immigrant women."

NOW Foundation assisted in preparations for the special rapporteur's mission to the U.S., submitting a discussion paper at a forum hosted by the University of Virginia School of Law's International Human Rights Clinic in early 2010. The document highlighted various types of violence against women, including gun violence, familicide, gang rape, acquaintance rape on campus, highway serial murders, sexual violence against Native American women, sexual assault in the U.S. military and violence against women in mass media.

Various reports prepared by organizations participating in the process will soon be published, including one on gun violence by West Virginia NOW leader Dr. Christina Vogt.



NOW Foundation hosted Hon. Rashida Manjoo (at head of table), special rapporteur on Violence Against Women for the United Nations, in January.

A version of that report was submitted by NOW Foundation and WV NOW to the U.N. Human Rights Council for the Ninth Periodic Review of the U.S. in December 2010.

In January of this year, NOW Foundation hosted a formal discussion at the National Action Center with allied organizations and Manjoo to further prepare her for the fact-finding mission.

Currently, we are awaiting response from the State Department to a letter NOW co-signed asking how the U.S. plans to implement Special Rapporteur Manjoo's recommendations.

Links to the reports referenced here can be found in the online version of this article at www.now.org/nnt/fall-2011/violence.html.

NOW Presses for ERA; Multiple Strategies at Work

Nearly all U.S. adults believe that women and men should have equal rights, and the vast majority of them also believe equality should be explicitly guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. So, what's the hold up?

On International Women's Day this year, Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) introduced a resolution to remove the arbitrary deadline that put a stop to the ratification process of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), thus preventing it from becoming part of the U.S. Constitution.

Congress passed the ERA in 1972, but stipulated that it must be ratified by at least 38 states within seven years. Feminists strongly criticized the deadline as a cynical effort to thwart ratification. The deadline was extended to 1982, but only 35 states ratified it by then, leaving the ERA three states short. Baldwin's resolution would allow ERA supporters to restart the campaign where they and their predecessors left off, with the drive to secure three more state ratifications.

NOW enthusiastically supports this "three-state strategy," as well as the new women's equality amendment introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) in June. A tireless force for

women's rights, Maloney has introduced this resolution into each session of Congress for years now.

"This country needs an equal rights amendment right now, and NOW supports and works toward all strategies to secure its long-overdue ratification," said NOW President Terry O'Neill. "Just this year, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia declared that he believes the Constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. With women's rights under increased attack, their economic security in peril and attitudes like Scalia's, it's abundantly clear that guaranteeing protection from sex discrimination is not just a moral imperative -- it's urgent."

Each of the states yet to ratify the ERA has a strong contingent of activists, often headed by NOW leaders. In February, NOW activists and allies celebrated a step toward progress when the Virginia Senate passed a resolution ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. Unfortunately, the House of Delegates companion bill was tabled twice, meaning no further action can be taken until the next legislative session.

This summer, the interns at the NOW Action Center created their own project to demonstrate

young women's vested interest in constitutional equality. The first phase was a series of posts on "What the ERA Means to Me" for NOW's "Say It, Sister!" blog. At summer's end, they created their own blog, where they are spreading the word about the ERA and encouraging others to share their stories. Check out the blog at <http://erameanstome.wordpress.com/> and add your story! Then check back on www.now.org/issues/era for the latest on the Maloney bill, the three-state strategy and more.

Indiana NOW generously sponsored the previous issue of the National NOW Times. If you're interested in sponsoring a future issue, please email nnt@now.org or call 202-628-8669, ext. 123.

Order Love Your Body Day Posters

NOW Foundation will celebrate its 14th annual Love Your Body Day on Oct. 19. Every year, activists, students, educators, health professionals, even models take this day to announce to the world that women and girls are beautiful just as they are -- no starvation diets, air-brushing or cosmetic surgery required.

Since 1998, the Love Your Body campaign has encouraged women and girls to stand up to unrealistic and unhealthy beauty standards promoted through advertising and all media. A wide range of activities takes place across the country: letter-writing parties, fashion shows, forums on women's health, even a 5k run.

Earlier this year, NOW Foundation expanded the campaign to include the "Let's Talk About It" project, which is collecting video submissions from anyone who has something to say about the radical act of embracing the real you in our looks-obsessed culture.

One of the most popular components of the Love Your Body campaign is the annual poster contest, which receives hundreds, sometimes thousands, of entries. Kyla Hollis, a college student from Arvada, Colo., designed the 2011 winner (pictured at right). Supplies are limited, so order the poster (and other products) at loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org right away!



ELECTIONS, from p.1

who fight for women's equality as "women that have been neutering American men and bringing us to the point of incredible weakness."

This kind of right-wing lunacy is just one example of why the 2012 elections are so crucial. Lois Frankel and the other NOW/PAC candidates can turn the political tide, and all of us must help them do it!

CHOICE, from p.1

ence is not always easy, but it works. Our goal during the week was to not engage at all with the anti-abortion rights extremists surrounding the clinic, and we did a pretty good job. It is not always easy when you are being screamed at or having a baby thrust in your face with an admonition that you would kill her. However, by not engaging we showed the community that the best antidote to terror truly is peace.

3. Young women are already leading the bulk of today's boots-on-the-ground movement for abortion rights, in truly intergenerational partnerships with older women. There is a lot of noise in the news media about younger feminists not existing, not caring about abortion rights, or being dismissed by older feminists. It would be nice if the reporters perpetuating that tired old storyline would have come to Germantown, because they would have seen that young women were the vast majority of those standing out in the streets -- in leading and not merely supporting roles.

Dr. Carhart noted after Operation Rescue went home that they prompted pro-choice advocates from around the country to get together and realize how strong we actually are -- an invaluable realization at a time of unprecedented attacks on a woman's fundamental right to control whether, when and how she might have children.

Excerpted from NOW Action Vice President Erin Matson's full story, which ran on rhrealitycheck.org



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Inside This Issue:

- 1 Summer of Choice:
What We Learned in Germantown
- 2 Deficit Cuts Threaten
Women's Economic Security
- 3 Momentum Growing
for Equal Marriage
- 4 2011 NOW Conference:
Action, Inspiration and Connection
- 5 NOW Urges More Funding for
Anti-Violence Programs