



Legislative Update: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

The Good: NARAL Pro-Choice Texas continues to work hard to improve access to a full range of reproductive options and support healthy Texas families!

We're proud to report that *Prevention First* initiatives including SB 837 and HB 1842 were introduced and heard in the House and Senate. In response to these and other initiatives, 328 witness cards were submitted in support of pro-choice bills. Meanwhile, NPCT volunteer Postcard Captains for Choice have been collecting postcards in towns across Texas to show constituency support of *Prevention First* initiatives.

In addition, we're proud to announce the latest edition of NPCT Foundation's report, *Crisis Pregnancy Centers in Texas: A Hidden Threat to Women's Health*. This report was instrumental in generating five pieces of pro-active legislation which aim to regulate Crisis Pregnancy Centers and their controversial contract with the State for \$5 million.

The Bad: However, certain Texas legislators continue to play politics with women's health by filing over a dozen pieces of anti-choice legislation. None of these bills include any prevention measures to protect women's health. NPCT has several top-priority bills to defeat in the coming weeks: First, Sen. Patrick (R-Houston)

filed a "trigger" bill (SB 186) which would create a near-total ban on abortions in Texas if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned and would dangerously jeopardize women's health. Second, the very invasive SB 785 by Sen. Shapiro (R-Plano) is a burdensome proposal that would regulate abortion providers through measures that serve no legitimate health care purposes.



To further demonstrate the political motivations of this measure, the author of the House version of the bill, Rep. Morrison, testified that no one from her district had contacted her about filing this bill, yet she made it a priority on her legislative agenda.

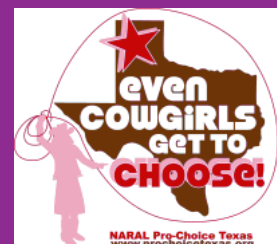
The Ugly: Sen. Dan Patrick (R-Houston) has filed several shocking pieces of anti-choice legislation. These include a "trigger" bill (SB 186), another that would create a controversial program to bribe pregnant women with \$500 for their newborn babies instead of choosing abortion (SB 1567), and yet another that would force women to review ultrasound images of their pregnancies before having an abortion - even against our wishes (SB 920). These extreme tactics by Sen. Patrick are prime examples of dangerous and divisive politics we are working hard to keep out of your doctor's office!

The Last Word:

Good news from our neighbors to the north and south!

On April 18, Gov. Henry of Oklahoma vetoed a dangerous and divisive abortion ban in Oklahoma. In an impressive display, more than 40 medical professionals stood behind him as he made his announcement. And in a landmark decision on April 24, Mexico City lawmakers voted to legalize abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

Make a choice fashion statement with an "Even Cowgirls Get to Choose" t-shirt! Baby tees and regular styles available. Visit www.ProChoiceTexas.org or call (512) 462-1661 to order.



Remember NARAL Pro-Choice Texas in your will, life insurance, or retirement plan! If you have questions, or would like the wording to do so, please contact Sara Cleveland at (512) 462-1661 or Sara@prochoicetexas.org

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Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

If you're involved in women's causes, you've likely heard the phrase "Safe, Legal, and Rare" when referring to abortion. I like it - almost. It addresses the fact that we see abortion as a woman's legal (and inherent) right; it validates our concern for women's health; it speaks to the concept of prevention, which we all agree is the best method for decreasing unwanted pregnancies. But what the phrase does not address is the issue of privacy. With the decision handed down by the Supreme Court on April 18, I find myself examining more closely the issue of privacy in women's health issues. This decision simultaneously puts politicians into the examining room with a woman and her doctor AND fails to mention that prosecuting these cases would involve providing numerous unknown individuals access to a woman's full medical records. Now I'm not sure about you, but I don't care for either of these invasions one iota.

So, my fellow supporters of individual rights, I present you with a proposition: Let's combat these invasions in two ways. First, let's raise our voices. Many people have looked to honor Molly Ivins' memory by "raising hell." Let's do the same and ensure that the people around us who aren't aware of what's happening right now, know. Second, let's renew our commitment to the cause and try to do even more in the coming months than we have in the past few to stop the invasions. With the Legislature in session, the conservative Supreme Court, and anti-choice lawmakers constantly trying to take away our rights, it's going to take a big effort on our part to hold our ground until the pendulum swings. Let's do it together, and let's do it with arms linked, shouting all the way, "Safe. Legal. Rare. Private."

Fondly,

Sara S. Cleveland

New Faces at NARAL Pro-Choice Texas:

Executive Director **Sara S. Cleveland** holds an M.S. in Educational Human Resource Development from Texas A&M. A native Texan, her diverse career portfolio includes work with organizations ranging from General Motors to the Lance Armstrong Foundation, where she served in various developmental capacities for the past five years.

Board member **Leslie Booker** holds a J.D. from Howard University School of Law. She has worked as a public defender and a local prosecutor, and currently serves as an attorney for the Texas Education Agency. She also volunteers for the Susan G. Komen Association Austin affiliate, and is a member of the Friends of Christopher Guild.

We're thrilled to be working with Sara and Leslie - please join us in welcoming them to the NARAL Pro-Choice Texas team!

Become a Monthly Sustainer - Join Sarah's Circle Today!



Your video rental membership is likely \$10 or more a month, your local newspaper subscription is \$15 or more, your gym membership is probably \$20 or more... how much is an organization fighting for your reproductive rights worth to you?

Please consider becoming a monthly donor by joining "Sarah's Circle," a group of monthly donors named in honor of Dr. Sarah Weddington, the Texas lawyer who argued and won *Roe v. Wade*.

Simply fill out the Sarah's Circle box on the enclosed return envelope
or visit www.ProChoiceTexas.org

HEROES OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

&

ZEROS OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE



Rep. Jessica Farrar (D-Houston) led the charge in support of women's health for yet another Session, filing numerous pro-active pro-choice bills. As one of only two pro-choice members (and the only woman!) on the House State Affairs

Committee, she has been instrumental in highlighting misguided and extreme anti-choice bills.

Rep. Anchia (D-Dallas) introduced *Prevention First* bills to ensure Contraceptive Equity coverage from insurance companies for contraceptives (HB 268) and signed on as a leader for the *Texas Prevention First Act of 2007*.

Sen. Watson (D-Austin) and Rep. Mark Strama (D-Austin) led the debate on *Prevention First* solutions by filing the *Texas Prevention First Act* (SB 837/ HB 1842) and garnering support from democratic and republican colleagues from across the state.

Rep. Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio) authored several pro-choice bills and amendments to regulate Crisis Pregnancy Centers (HB 2223), and and makes us proud as a leader on the House floor by urging *Prevention First* solutions.



Sen. Patrick (R-Houston) tops this list for his zealous assaults on women's health in Texas. Not only did he file a dangerous and extreme bill to create a near-total ban on abortion in Texas (SB 186), he also proposed two other shocking bills: one to pay pregnant women \$500 for their newborn babies (SB 1567); and another to force women to view ultrasound images regardless of their consent (SB 920)!

Sen. Shapiro (R-Plano) and Rep. Morrison (R-Victoria), introduced companion bills (SB 785 & HB 1750) that would require the state government to collect a laundry-list of personal and private medical information from women seeking abortion care in Texas.

Rep. Swinford (R-Dumas). As Chair of House State Affairs Committee, he has routinely put politics before policy to support attacks on women's health. In a particularly bold move, he controlled the order of testimony at an April 2nd hearing, forcing pro-choice supporters to wait behind anti-choice witnesses for over 7 hours before testifying!

Rep. Chisum (R-Pampa) continues his legacy as an anti-choice champion in the Texas House, calling for a dangerous and extreme near-total bill ban on abortion in Texas (HB 175).
Need we say more?

Federal Abortion Ban: What does this mean for our country and Texas?

"For the first time since Roe, the Court blesses a prohibition with no exception protecting a woman's health ... the Court's defense of it, cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and again by this Court – and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women's lives. A decision so at odds with our jurisprudence should not have staying power." -Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissent in the Federal Abortion Ban cases (*Gonzales v. Carhart* and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood*)

What happened in Washington, DC:

On April 18, 2007 the U.S. Supreme Court voted 5-4 to uphold the Federal Abortion Ban, providing no exception to protect a woman's health. This decision marks a landmark setback for women's health throughout the United States, and especially in states like Texas where anti-choice politicians routinely play politics with women's health. The Supreme Court struck down an almost identical state law as unconstitutional in 2000, and every federal court to hear a challenge to this first-ever federal ban on abortion declared it unconstitutional. Until now.

Response in Texas:

In response to the decision, over 150 supporters of women's health, freedom and privacy joined together in front of the State Capitol building in Austin with less than 24 hours notice to raise awareness about this landmark setback for women's health and, to urge Texas lawmakers to abandon similar dangerous and divisive anti-choice measures here in Texas.

In times like these, it's important to reflect on powerful demonstrations of our values like the March for Women's Lives on Washington, DC just three years ago in April 2004. While many were not able to attend, the 1.4 million people who marched that day created the largest march of its kind in American history. We are pro-choice America; we are pro-choice Texans and we will prevail.



Over 150 supporters gathered at the State Capitol on April 19 to protest the Supreme Court's decision

Take Action for Women's Health!

3 THINGS TO DO RIGHT NOW:

1. **Call your legislator.** Your lawmakers need to hear your voice your support for pro-choice, preventive initiatives and your opposition to unnecessary and invasive anti-choice legislation.
2. **Become a Postcard Collector for Choice and make a difference this legislative session.** By collecting 10 postcards you'll help friends and family take 5 minutes to communicate with their legislators about the importance of *Prevention First* solutions. It's easy—we'll send you a kit with everything you need to be successful getting *Prevention First* postcards signed. For a postcard kit, contact Beth@prochoicetexas.org.
3. **Write a letter to your local newspaper editor.** Letters to the editor are often the most-read section of a newspaper, and they're a great way to educate thousands of your neighbors about choice-related issues in the Texas legislature. For tips and instructions, contact Laurie@prochoicetexas.org.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITY:

This summer, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation will undertake two new survey projects. One is an ambitious survey of all Houston pharmacies to determine and highlight the availability of emergency contraception (EC) for Houston-area women. The other is an investigation into controversial Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) in Texas. **We'll be counting on pro-choice supporters across Texas to help conduct these surveys over the phone. If you have a phone, you can help out!** We'll send you everything you'll need in a survey kit through the mail! For more information about how to help survey Houston pharmacies or CPCs in Texas (from the convenience of your own home) please contact Laurie@prochoicetexas.org or call (512) 462-1661.



Volunteer Spotlight: Gail (Houston)

71-year old Gail is a web and marketing designer, as well as a teacher at her local community college. When asked about why she got involved with our *Prevention First* campaign, Gail responds, “**Only by educating our young people can we hope to eliminate the need for abortion.** As a former social worker who worked with unwed mothers, I never saw a situation where abortion was a first choice. Most often, I heard women say something to the effect that they didn't believe that they would or could get pregnant. This is definitely a situation where sex education given at the right time would have prevented an unhappy circumstance.”

As for her views on reproductive rights: “**I see a ban on abortion as a means of preventing poor women from having an abortion. More affluent women have always been able to get safe abortions ... A ban on abortions means legal, safe abortions for the wealthy, and back-alley procedures under unsafe conditions for the poor.** Lack of sex education together with lack of access to reproductive rights only adds up to an increasingly large underprivileged population.”

Volunteer Spotlight: Christina (San Antonio)

36-year-old Christina is a self-described attorney, property manager, and agitator. A former Naval Officer, Christina volunteered to become a Postcard Captain for our *Prevention First* campaign this spring. Why did she volunteer to be a Postcard Captain? “**I believe small acts can make big differences...** The postcard campaign demonstrates this principle and has proved to be an easy piece of activism for me. Many folks will support this worthy cause if asked. I have had no problem explaining the *Prevention First* Act and getting men and women to sign on.” Christina got involved with NARAL Pro-Choice Texas because she believes that “**every human being must be able to make his or her own decisions regarding the basic course of his or her private life.**”

