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Have you seen our new website? Check it out at www.prochoicetexas.org. Our goal is to make it more interesting and even easier to use than our old site, with more resources than ever... let us know what you think!

Overview of the 80th Legislative Session

The 80th Legislative Session was not able to pass any significant changes for women's health in Texas. While no anti-choice measures passed the legislature, no proactive measures to improve women's health were passed either. However, the good news is that HB 1842, the *Texas Prevention First Act of 2007*, moved further through the legislative process than any similar measure in recent memory!

While most anti-choice bills did not make it through the committee process, several extreme anti-choice bills including SB 785, the *Medical Records Invasion Act*, and SB 920, the *Mandatory Ultrasound Viewing* bill, were up for consideration until the 11th hour at the Capitol with many speculating they were caught up in a possible Speaker's race.

Furthermore, while nothing "bad" happened for women's health, nothing "good" happened either. The state of Texas still subsidizes Crisis

Pregnancies Centers (biased counseling centers) with \$5 million in taxpayer funds that could prevent unintended pregnancies or provide women with child-care assistance. And, Texas still makes a failing grade when it comes to women's health.

Bills relating to women's health by the numbers:

41 choice-related bills filed;
16 pro-choice bills supported by women's health groups;
15 anti-choice bills opposed by women's health groups;
2 Republican co-authors on

HB 1842, the *Texas Prevention First Act*.

With regard to women's health, Texas ranks:

50th (dead last!) of Non-Elderly Women with Health Insurance
35th in Access to Adequate Prenatal Care
44th in Women Aged 40+ Who Receive Mammograms
47th of Women Aged 18+ Who Receive Pap Smears
45th in Access to Family Planning
1st in Teen Pregnancy



NPCT staff delivering 1,800+ signed postcards & petitions with Prevention First co-authors Rep. Strama, Rep. Gonzales, Rep. Rodriguez, and Rep. Anchia on May 3.

Call for EC Survey Volunteers

This fall, thanks to a generous grant from the Institute for Reproductive Health Access, NPCT will be collaborating with The Plan B Project to create a website providing Houston women with an online directory of pharmacies and clinics carrying Plan B (the "Morning-After Pill") and their respective prices. This site will be modeled after www.MorningAfterPillAustin.com, which currently serves women looking for emergency contraception (EC) in the greater Austin area.

In order to obtain the data to create this resource, we will be surveying all Houston-area pharmacies, city and county health

clinics, and women's health clinics that may provide EC. The results of this survey will be published on the new web directory and used as a catalyst for direct policy change regarding reproductive health and contraception in the Houston area.

We need your help to make this important survey happen! If you have a phone and just a few minutes, you can be an EC survey volunteer. To learn more, contact Laurie at (512) 462-1661 or laurie@prochoicetexas.org.



Photo courtesy Joe Raedle / Getty Images



NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation is a proud member of Community Shares of Texas. To learn more about donating to NPCT Foundation through workplace giving, visit www.communitysharestx.org or call (800) TX-SHARE.



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Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I echo the sentiments of many when I ask where this summer has gone. I can't believe that I have now been with NARAL for five months, but what an amazing ride it has already been. We were in the thick of the 80th Legislative Session when I came aboard. I had the privilege of watching dozens of men and women, passionately dedicated to the cause, spend all hours of the day and night at the Capitol waiting patiently as anti-choice speakers were paraded to the podium one after another. Finally, in the wee hours of the morning, you took your place and spoke your minds, your hearts. You came for varied reasons: to ensure your position was recorded, to share your personal experiences with legislators, to influence legislation, to find comfort in being part of a group willing to stand up and be counted. The strength, patience, grace, and gumption shown by our supporters and our coalition partners was deeply inspirational. Before I knew it, the Session was over and the result of this immense dedication was clear. **Despite Texas having an anti-choice Governor, Lieutenant Governor, House, Senate, and Speaker, we were still able to stop 100% of new anti-choice legislation, while our *Prevention First* bill made it further than ever before!**


To give you an opportunity to relish this success, we have planned quite a party! On Thursday, October 11th, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas will host its 21st annual "Celebration of Choice" silent auction and live music benefit at the former home of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Threadgill's South Austin. We'd love for you to join us and hundreds of Texas who, like you, are ready to celebrate our collective success! More information on Celebration of Choice is included below.

As we enjoy the last few weeks of summer and look to the fall for cooler weather, football games, and the smell of burning leaves, remember that we appreciate all that you do. And know also that we'll be calling on you again soon. We have accomplished much and the momentum is with us. This summer proves how quickly time can fly and November of 2008 will be here before we know it. **The success we had this time around was directly related to the hard work you did last year to put legislators in place who would vote for choice.** It's time to start that process again. We have amazing plans for the next 16 months and to ensure we keep the pendulum swinging in the right direction, we have to start right now. So I have a proposition. Come to the Celebration of Choice and let's celebrate two things: Our Past Success and Our Future Success!

Warmest regards,



Sara S. Cleveland
 Executive Director



Does your employer match gifts to nonprofit organizations? Double the value of your donation to NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation in one easy step! You'll receive a tax deduction and so will your employer. Please ask your personnel office for the employee matching gift forms, sign and send them to us, and we'll take care of the rest!

[Please note: NPCT Foundation's tax identification number is 74-2543342.]

Intern Report

By Avery Woods, Public Affairs Intern

This past summer I had the privilege of taking on the third edition of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas' Crisis Pregnancy Center (CPC) Report. The focus of the third CPC report has been on a statewide survey of all CPCs.

With the help of NPCT volunteers and interns, the 180 CPCs were called and asked a series of questions. Callers posed as 20-year-old girls who were unsure about whether they were pregnant and wished to know the ser-

vices each CPC provided. Special attention was taken with the Texas Pregnancy Care Network (TPCN) providers. TPCN providers receive state funding for their services, which has been redirected from vital Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds that normally fund comprehensive family planning clinics.

The report seeks to inform women about the dangers CPCs impose on their health. Most importantly, CPCs take

away a women's right to choose whether she wants to keep her baby, adopt, or abort. CPCs also do not have trained medical professionals or counselors on staff. This third installment of the report will empower women to make more informed decisions and join in the fight against CPCs in Texas.



Avery Woods is a Master's student at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT Austin.



Journey to Reproductive Justice

The following article was written by NPCT staff and board members who attended the 2nd Annual Conference of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective in May 2007.

Even a casual observer, without realizing there is a problem, can see a disconnect: NARAL Pro-Choice Texas is an organization whose mission is to serve every single woman, girl, and family in Texas. Yet the vast majority of our staff, interns, volunteers, board of directors, dues-paying members, event attendees, and coalition partners looks similar: white, with at least one degree and a certain amount of disposable income. Many of us see this but don't understand the root causes and so don't know what to do differently.

Enter SisterSong. Thanks to the wholehearted support of our board of directors and affiliate and national staff, we were able to send three participants to the SisterSong conference this spring. The three of us returned to Texas armed with an overwhelming array of different ideas, new perspectives, and a list of challenges we're committed to addressing: how does our work speak to populations where teen pregnancy is the norm and not "an epidemic"? How can our mission address the root causes of reproductive injustices (such as poverty) to inspire activism? How can we build programs to reach out to diverse communities to best fulfill our mission?

Many of us working to further the mission of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas are either unaware of these issues taking place in the communities in our own backyard or unsure of what to do about them. But, through our mission, we have a duty to address these issues and incorporate the power and struggles of diverse communities into our grassroots movement to educate and mobilize *all* women for women's health and reproduc-

...The pro-choice/anti-choice abortion movement and its ideologies only address a fraction of the needs of a fraction of women...

tive rights.

One of the most valuable points the conference drove home was that reproductive justice isn't just another project or outreach program to add to our agenda. In order to be truly successful, we must work to incorporate it into everything we do already. Otherwise, we're just continuing to draw divisions between the work that we do and the populations that the mainstream pro-choice movement has historically ignored. When we expand our framework to include everyone – every woman and girl and family, with *all* of their individual situations and reproductive needs – it becomes clear that the pro-choice/anti-choice abortion movement and its ideologies only address a fraction of the needs of a fraction of these women.

So what happens to the rest? Do we ignore them because the work we've historically done isn't useful to them? Or do we trans-

form the work we do so that it becomes useful to them? If we're honestly committed to serving the needs of every woman, there's only one way we can possibly answer that question.

The myriad voices expressed at the SisterSong conference reflect the African-American, Latina, Native American, and Asian Pacific Islander perspectives that have historically been missing from the dialogue at NARAL Pro-Choice Texas workgroups and events. Our state, like many others, is incredibly diverse in terms of ethnicities and cultures. The Texas staff and board members have made a renewed commitment to incorporate a full range of diversity perspectives into our work, in order to truly work for reproductive health and rights for all women. As we do this, we welcome both your questions and your advice in order to help us accomplish our individual and shared goals in the journey to reproductive justice.

To learn more about SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, visit www.SisterSong.net.



Photo courtesy www.ruckus.org.

What is Reproductive Justice?

From "A New Vision for Reproductive Justice" by Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice and "Understanding Reproductive Justice" by SisterSong.

Reproductive justice is the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, economic, and social well-being of women and girls. It encompasses three main principles: 1.) a woman's right *not* to have children; 2.) a woman's right to *have* children; and 3.) a woman's right to *parent* the children she has.

Strategies include: advancing an agenda that wins real changes for poor women and girls of color; supporting the leadership and power of the most excluded groups of women & girls while addressing the impacts of oppression on their lives; and integrating multi-racial, multi-generational, multi-class issues & constituencies into the national policy arena.

For more information: www.prochoicetexas.org/issues



Loretta Ross, SisterSong National Coordinator

Save the Date: 21st Annual Celebration of Choice

On Thursday, October 11th, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas will host its 21st annual "Celebration of Choice" silent auction and live music benefit at the former home of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Threadgill's South Austin. Come join us for a plate of renowned feel-good southern food, soak in the history of the Armadillo and its salad days of the 1970's, and have a beverage while enjoying live music under the stars in the fun, family-friendly beer garden.

Enjoy music by local favorites Ruthie Foster and Sara Hickman as you browse our world-class silent auction. Past auction items have included a bed-and-breakfast vacation package in beautiful San Miguel de Allende, VIP tickets to a filming of "The Daily Show" in New York,

and a framed photograph of the historic March for Women's Lives signed by Sarah Weddington and the late Molly Ivins and Ann Richards. If you're on our mailing list, be on the lookout for a sneak preview of what this year's auction will bring!

Best of all, this event brings together hundreds of like-minded Texans to support our work and raises nearly 30% of our annual budget. So what are you waiting for? Visit www.prochoicetexas.org to order your tickets today! Or sign up to help sponsor this event and receive free passes for friends and family, get your name listed in the invitation, and have an ad included in the program.

For more information, go to www.prochoicetexas.org or call (512) 462-1661.



Take Action for Women's Health

- 1. SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US.** Have you ever visited a Crisis Pregnancy Center? Did you have trouble obtaining the morning-after pill at your local pharmacy? Does your teenager receive medically inaccurate, abstinence-only sex education at school? Why is reproductive freedom important to you? Send your stories to katie@prochoicetexas.org! [Note: We will not share or publish your story without your permission.]
- 2. JOIN SARAH'S CIRCLE.** We understand that it can be hard to donate a large sum of money all at once. Why not donate a small amount each month? Monthly donors are the financial backbone of our organization, and donations can be made in a variety of ways: charged to your credit card, deducted from your checking account, or invoiced quarterly. Contact us at katie@prochoicetexas.org to learn about the benefits of becoming a monthly donor!
- 3. BECOME A CAMPUS ORGANIZER.** Do you attend a college or university in Texas? Are you interested in learning more about starting a pro-choice student group or organizing for reproductive freedom on your campus? We'll provide you with everything you need, including a campus organizing guide, monthly consultations with NPCT staff, freebies to hand out, and more! Contact laurie@prochoicetexas.org to learn more about our Campus Organizing Program.

Call for Auction Items

Do you know a famous person who'd be willing to autograph something? Can you get free passes to a theater or music event? Are you a massage therapist or hairstylist in the Austin area? What about a vacation home you'd be willing to donate for a week or a weekend? We're currently looking for fabulous items to include in our Celebration of Choice silent auction. This is a fun, creative way to donate your talents or connections and raise money for women's reproductive freedoms in Texas!

Have an idea about a donation? Let us know at (512) 462-1661 or katie@prochoicetexas.org

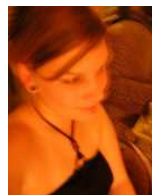
Volunteer Spotlight: Ali (Denton, TX)

24-year-old Ali works at a boarding school; she is also a full-time student at Texas Woman's University focusing on Women's Studies. This summer, she helped us to update our Crisis Pregnancy Center (CPC) Report by surveying CPCs over the phone from her home in Denton. (For more information on the CPC survey, see "Intern Report" on page 1.) Ali wanted to work on this project **"to help bring attention to CPCs and the misinformation and pressure they so commonly rely on to convince usually young, scared women to make decisions that may not be in their best interest."**

The many forms of oppression women suffer around the world inspire Ali to work with organizations like NARAL Pro-Choice Texas: "The domination of women's reproductive rights is one polarizing issue repeatedly exploited by certain groups to control a huge aspect of women's lives - their health. What [these

groups] are saying when they try to pass restrictive legislation or ban abortion rights is that **even in our supposedly free and equal society, women are still not trusted to make their own health and family planning decisions.** "

Ali believes that even the smallest actions of a few can make a huge impact. She's a great example of how you can make a difference for women's reproductive freedoms in Texas even without making a big donation. "I don't have the money so I give the time," Ali says—and we're so glad she does!



It's easy to become a NARAL Pro-Choice Texas volunteer... contact us at volunteer@prochoicetexas.org or (512) 462-1661 to find out how you can get involved!