McHenry County Citizens for Choice
P.O. Box 16 • Woodstock, Illinois 60098

NEWSLETTER

Produced by McHenry County Citizens for Choice Inc

Where were you on February 2, 2010 (Primary) & November 2, 2010? (General)

Think back to 2010. The one thing you heard over and over again from politicians was how they planned to focus on jobs and the economy.

In practice, the new Republican House leadership failed to articulate an economic strategy beyond cutting spending. Instead of addressing the economy and jobs they passed a long list of bills to restrict women's health and rights. Specifically, the GOP "Pledge to America" calls for "a government-wide prohibition on taxpayer funding of abortion and subsidies for insurance coverage that includes abortion."

A survey conducted by Hart Research and funded by Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PP) shows that large majorities of voters, including those who voted Republican or Tea Party, are strongly against the proposed attacks.

Key findings from the survey:

71% are against cutting federal funding for preventive health services at PP health centers.

88% support comprehensive sex education for teens which includes information and training on abstinence as well as birth control and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

75% support policies to reduce unintended pregnancies through greater access to birth control.

77 % disagree with making abortion illegal, including in cases of rape or incest.

74% disagreed with making women who choose to purchase private health insurance with their own money pay higher taxes if it includes abortion coverage.

The results confirm that even Republican voters oppose the GOP leadership's restrictive agenda on women's health.

IS ANYONE LISTENING??

Where will you be on March 20, 2012 (Primary) & November 6, 2012 (General)?

Come out of the closet!!

Claim your pro-choice bona fides because by blending into the background and allowing the conversation to degenerate into "finding common ground on abortion" we have watched the land shift beneath our feet. We have more restrictions, more waiting periods, more hurdles and many fewer clinics. States have passed laws that make abortion and reproductive health less accessible than it has been in decades, daring legal action that could take these laws to the Supreme Court where the result would be exceedingly uncertain.

Former president of NARAL, Kate Michelman, explained our present dilemma this way:
"In the craven mission for common ground or bipartisanship at all cost you compromise your own values. In the 80's we issued a challenge to the anti-choice movement. If you oppose abortion, you should advocate for birth control, sex ed and better resources for women. We were about ensuring the best for women. The other side starts in a different place. They are troubled by sex and religious morals. The only value they had is that abortion is wrong. In the healthcare debate women got thrown under the bus so our representatives could find common ground with Catholic bishops."

Now women will not be granted the right to have healthcare that allows pregnancy termination. The need to keep pure Christian money from getting tainted by touching the desk of a clinic or the paper from an insurance company that covers abortion is greater than any concern for the life of a desperate poor woman. So how do we keep our reproductive rights from eroding further? The pro-choice message is not getting to Washington and the state capitols but the anti-choice message is.

WE CANNOT FIND COMMON GROUND WITH ANTI-CHOICE POLITICIANS!!

VOTE PRO-CHOICE in 2012

The Illinois Parental Notice of Abortion Act

This law was passed in 1995 but has never been enforced. It is currently under appeal. It would require minors under the age of 18 to obtain written documentation of notification from an adult family figure (a parent, legal guardian, grandparent, or resident step-parent) before obtaining an abortion. A minor could also pursue judicial bypass to waive notification.

It is critical to understand how these laws may impact adolescents. Most minors notify a parent. Those who do not have legitimate fears for not doing so. Research shows that minors who fear to notify their parent are most likely to suffer negative and harmful consequences. These laws are now in effect in 36 states.

The Illinois Parental Notice Act is irrational. Under Illinois law, pregnant minors can make all other medical decisions, even those involving far greater risk than a safe, legal abortion, without involuntarily involving a parent or being forced to go to court.

A pregnant minor can decide:

- to continue her pregnancy and give birth,
- consent to far riskier medical care, including a cesarean section,
- can place her child for adoption

all without notifying a parent.

In addition, the Illinois Constitution does not permit the singling out of a single medical procedure for such exceptional and discriminatory treatment. Judge Daniel Riley of the Circuit Court of Cook County was careful and blunt in describing the Illinois law as "unfortunate," and in noting that enforcement of the Act will result in horrible outcomes for some young women, including "physical and emotional abuse."

Major medical organizations across the nation oppose forced parental involvement laws which are often harmful to the health and safety of young women. The following organizations filed a friend of the court brief in the Illinois Court of Appeals in support of Plaintiffs' effort to block this dangerous law.

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Medical Women's Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Illinois Psychiatric Society
- Illinois Public Health Association
- Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine

If permitted to take effect, this Act will impose significant and irreversible harm on young women seeking to exercise their fundamental right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. But the risk for the minor will not come from the abortion procedure. Abortion is one of the safest surgical procedures for women. The risk of death associated with abortion is approximately 0.6 per 100,000 abortions and the risk of major complications is less that 1%. The risk of death when a pregnancy is continued to birth is about 11 times as great as the risk of death from induced abortion.

The harm to young women has been well documented as they report being beaten by family members, thrown out of their homes, subjected to emotional abuse and prolonged violence and degradation. Some were protecting their families who were going through particularly difficult times or had strong religious opposition. Some were forced to carry the pregnancy to term against their wishes. Judicial bypass has a whole different set of burdens for a minor: travel to a courthouse, confidentiality and delay. Some desperately try to self-induce an abortion or seek an illegal abortion which could result in serious complications or death.

For a qualitative and comprehensive study on the issues surrounding this subject you may access the *University of Chicago, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Section of Family Planning & Contraceptive Research:* http://familyplanning.uchicago.edu/research/studies-by-topic/aiad/index.shtml

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Fast moving legislative events sometimes necessitate making contact with supporters between newsletters to suggest actions that may be taken to influence outcomes.

You can trust us! We do not sell, share or in any way allow your privacy to be compromised. You will not get advertising or any unnecessary emails. Things usually happen around the time legislatures are in session or election times so there may be clusters of emails at those times, punctuated by periods of silence.

Return the coupon below or use the email address to contact us.

Join Our Information Network

Visit our website!
www.mcccprochoice.org

Get the latest information in the format you prefer. Keep in touch by sending us your:

Name_____
Address_____
Email_____
Phone_____

MCCC
P.O. Box 16
Woodstock, IL 60098
Telephone: 815-338-8030
Facsimile: 815-338-7847
Email:choice@mcccprochoice.org

Thank You!!

For your loyal financial support. If you wish to contribute:

_____A once a year gift of $10 in your birth month will provide basic organizational support plus a subscription to our bimonthly newsletter.

_____$25 or more gives you benefactor status and the opportunity to increase the scope and activities of MCCC.

McHenry County Citizens for Choice, Inc. is a 501 (c)(4) organization. Contributions are not tax deductible.

MOVING FORWARD - LONG TERM GOALS AND PROJECTS

In August 2007 MCCC joined with over 30 other pro-choice organizations to begin a discussion on how to shape the next chapter of reproductive health in Illinois. The coalition focused not only on the legislature and the courts, but also on how to shift the public debate on a broad range of issues including abortion, access to sexual health care, comprehensive sexuality education and women's rights.

At the time of the first meeting the ACLU was involved in litigation against the Attorney General's efforts to have the federal court lift the injunction on the 1995 Parental Notification of Abortion Act. This has proven to be an ongoing issue and to this date is still in litigation. (See page 2 of newsletter for update)

The coalition discussed a process for developing plans which would protect access to abortion and all reproductive care in Illinois and to organize around the advancement of a broad pro-active, pro-choice agenda. The goal was to ensure that Illinois remained a pro-choice state by countering efforts to restrict access and to expand access to reproductive health services for all Illinois women and girls. It was determined that it was vital to focus on community mobilization and actions to build support across the state.

The need to develop long term and affirmative plans for legislation in Illinois remains critical since the US Supreme Court shifted radically to the right. That became vividly apparent when in 2007 they upheld the ban on abortion procedures. States are now more free to regulate abortion than ever before and the court's emphasis has dramatically changed from the doctor and patient to the fetus. Until this abortion decision, the doctor-patient relationship seemed to be protected by the constitution. As long as physicians were practicing in what they deemed the best interests and health of the patient, the government could not interfere with that relationship. That fundamental concept has been shaken. Anti-choice forces are greatly emboldened in this environment and are strategically introducing a myriad of anti-choice bills seeing that old precedents appear to no longer exist. Illinois is experiencing these pressures and we can expect some hard fights ahead.

Since that first meeting in 2007 the coalition has continued to meet, strategize and support the work of the leadership council through weekly conference calls and periodic in person meetings. MCCC activists Mary Ewert and Dee Manny have served as co-chairs of the Organizing and Outreach Committee for the coalition.

The legislative process is interesting, confusing and frustrating. The first attempt to pass a comprehensive all inclusive **Reproductive Justice and Access Act** was not successful. There followed a succession of bills written and introduced with new sponsors but none have advanced all the way through committees and both houses. It does not help that we do not have a solidly pro-choice General Assembly.

A big THANK YOU to all who responded in the past to email requests for calls to senators and representatives as bills were introduced and votes were counted. If you are interested in becoming more personally and actively involved, there is much work to be done. Please contact us through our website or by phone or email. We welcome your participation.

Next on the agenda - passing comprehensive, medically accurate sex education for the schools:

Personal Responsibility Education Program Act HB 3027

Formerly known as **SB 1619 Illinois Personal Responsibility Education Program (Illinois-PREP) Act,** SB 1619 was passed out of the Senate. The last action that was needed in the House was to pass a motion to concur with Senate amendments. But time ran out and the session ended before it could be done. There will be time to get it through in the fall veto session. We will get out fact sheets through email and the Newsletter and will post it on the website under the new number HB 3027. **We need help passing this bill!**

Comprehensive sex education goes a long way in reducing teen pregnancy. The personal cost for a teen is enormous as a life-altering event. Reducing teen pregnancy improves the well-being of children, youth and families. It also saves taxpayer dollars. At a time when policy makers are intensely focused on cost-saving measures, funding proven efforts to reduce teen pregnancy is important, timely and should be a high priority.

Teen childbearing in Illinois cost taxpayers at least $501 million in 2008. Of these costs, 45% were federal costs and 55% were state and local costs. Between 1991 and 2008 there have been approximately 380,195 teen births in Illinois costing taxpayers a total of $11.9 billion. Most of the public sector costs are associated with negative consequences for the children of teen mothers. This analysis was funded in part from a grant from the Division of Reproductive Health within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visit www.TheNationalCampaign.org/costs for more information.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

McHENRY COUNTY FAIR
Wednesday, August 3 thru Sunday August 7 - County Fairgrounds
Near Intersection of Rt. 47 and Country Club Rd., Woodstock

Sign up now to help staff the MCCC/Planned Parenthood table at the fair and get the time slot you prefer. Fair rules require the table to be staffed from 10 in the morning until 10 in the evening. Our schedule is set up for four hour time slots (10-2, 2-6, 6-10). Ask a friend to volunteer with you or we will assign another activist to join you.

Join us to represent the pro-choice face of McHenry County.

2010	**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 3**	**THURSDAY AUGUST 4**	**FRIDAY AUGUST 5**	**SATURDAY AUGUST 6**	**SUNDAY AUGUST 7**
10 am - 2 pm					
2 pm - 6 pm					
6 pm - 10 pm					

Write your name in the space you are requesting. Then add your address and phone number and email at the bottom or on the back and return in the envelope. If you are volunteering with a friend, please include their information.

****

SAVE THE DATE

IN THE PLANNING STAGES

We are planning a program for a Saturday in August. It will be either on August 20 or 27 and will take place at McHenry Savings Bank between the hours of 11 AM and 3 PM. This program will be the kick off for a campaign to provide information on SB 1619, Comprehensive Sex Education for Illinois. There will be a film, literature, and a speaker - combined to give us an in-depth exploration of what this bill contains and what it will bring to our Illinois schools. We will also discuss the opposition to the bill and how everyone can get behind the effort to pass this legislation.

****

NORTHERN ILLINOIS WOMENS CLINIC

For a year now, MCCC activists have been making the trek to Rockford in support of the clinic and to counter a virulent anti-choice presence in the form of religious extremists. This is not an escorting situation - patients drive into the parking lot and enter the clinic from the rear entrance. The anti's attempt to stop the cars to give them objectionable literature. We hold signs in support and wave cars in. The clinic is open on Wednesdays and Fridays. If you would like to join us and the Rockford Pro-choice community in defense of clinic access, contact us by email or phone and we will get back to you with dates, times, car pool arrangements and meeting places.