



McHenry County Citizens for Choice

P.O. Box 16 • Woodstock, Illinois 60098

NEWSLETTER

Produced by McHenry County Citizens for Choice Inc

It's About Women's Lives

In the long history of the pursuit of women's rights we have marched, picketed and demonstrated. The first wave feminism was critical in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in giving women the right to vote and basic rights in owning property. We were told passage of Roe v. Wade would secure reproductive rights for women and we took the bait. We sat back and relaxed with confidence that the issue was settled. But law and religion have always fought to dominate women, to ensure females remain second-class citizens and we are becoming painfully aware of that fact now.

Case in Point:Illinois

- The passage of HB 40 and the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) required an enormous amount of sustained effort over many years, and was finally passed by the slimmest of margins. HB 40 passed the Illinois House with a mere two votes to spare and the Illinois Senate with three. The RHA passed the House and the Senate with just four votes to spare. We have razor thin pro-choice margins in both chambers with no room for error.

There is dangerous and misleading information circulating that claims Illinois is a safe haven for abortion rights and our work is done. The truth is that reproductive rights are NOT secure in Illinois because we are just one election away from losing all of the ground we have gained recently.

- There are currently 27 anti-abortion bills pending in the Illinois General Assembly. If passed into law, these bills would, among other things, repeal HB 40 and the RHA, outlaw abortion, impose criminal penalties on physicians, and outlaw embryonic stem cell research to find cures and advanced treatments for diseases like diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer's, and COVID-19. All of these bills are sponsored by Republicans. Losing pro-choice legislators could propel these bills into law.
- Numerous lawsuits have been filed to challenge HB 40 and the RHA designed to render both laws meaningless. The Illinois Supreme Court has already sided with anti-choice activists to put the health and lives of young women at risk. With two virulently anti-choice appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court, anti-choice Republicans are trying to strip women of the constitutional protection for abortion and birth control. We need the Illinois legislature to step up and protect women, no matter what the courts do!

VOTE PRO-CHOICE

The Long-Term Struggle

Certain types of right-wing Republicans could not and have not accepted the independence of women. The idea that a woman could be a doctor, lawyer or pilot was laughed off and public misogyny is still widespread. Although younger women are busy enjoying the rights that their mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers fought and won for them, they have a hard time focusing on the fact that there are those in power who are intent on revoking those rights.

Our strategy must be to refuse to be locked into a defensive position. If we are fighting their agenda, then we are not promoting ours. Political power means being on the offensive. The strategy to stop state attacks on restrictions and access to abortion is to pass the following legislation at the federal level.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Women's Health Protection Act of 2019

This bill "enshrines" in federal law "a woman's right to receive abortion services and a provider's right to perform an abortion. Introduced May 23, 2019—Senate Bill (SB 1645) sponsored by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and House Bill (HR 2975) sponsored by Representative Judy Chu (D-CA). The bill would block states from placing any medically unnecessary restrictions on abortion care from medically inaccurate informed consent requirements to gestational bans. That means no waiting periods, no requirements that clinic doors be a certain width, unnecessary ultrasounds, or heartbeat bills.

Quick Civics Lesson on Legislative Procedure

The **116th United States Congress** is the current session of the legislative branch of the United States Federal Government, composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress works in two-year legislative sessions tied to the elections. The 116th convened in Washington, D.C., on January 3, 2019 and it will end on January 3, 2021.

All bills not enacted by the end of the session on Jan 3, 2021 die. Congress must then start over. The bills will be the same but will have new numbers. A bill must be passed by both the House and the Senate in identical form and then be signed by the President to become law.

Why are Illinois' "fundamental rights" getting harder to exercise?

When Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) it virtually eliminated all state restrictions on abortion, sterilization and availability of contraception.

At the same time consolidation is bringing more hospitals under the control of expanding Catholic organizations. Being under Catholic control means fewer hospitals providing reproductive services. It means some women have to travel farther for treatment Medicare managed patients are disproportionately affected as they don't have uniform access to family planning service.

Data from the Illinois Health and Hospital Association shows the number of Catholic hospitals rose 7 percent over the last five years, while non-Catholic hospitals declined 1 percent. Forty-seven of the state's 210 hospitals are owned by Catholic systems.

These facilities operate under the Ethical & Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services or ERD's, developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Lee, 38, a patient who attempted to replace her soon to expire contraceptive implant was told by a primary care doctor in the Catholic system that "all women should be required to have children." She eventually got her implant replaced at Planned Parenthood

Medical professionals are supposed to be neutral. Dr. Abdur-Rahman, ob/gyn, left his practice when it was acquired by Catholic HealthCare. He worried that his hands would be tied in cases where women were at risk for infection or death if they couldn't get an abortion.

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