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Maine Women's Lobby

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P.O. Box 15, Hallowell, Maine 04347
Telephone 622-0851

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March 1992

NEWSLETTER

Number 2

Women and Children Last

The Inequities of the Budget Proposal

by **MARY McPHERSON**
MWL Executive Director

A major focus of the work of the Maine Women's Lobby this session is Governor McKernan's proposed '92-'93 budget (L.D. 2185). The Lobby opposes the cuts and, along with other member groups of the **Taxpayers for a Fair Budget**, urges the Governor and Legislature to put sales tax exemptions, the income tax

formula, and other taxation issues on the table when discussing potential cuts in programs and benefits.

As you know, the Appropriations Committee held hearings in nine towns and cities around Maine during the first week of February. The public outpouring of opposition to cuts in funding of programs with a major impact on women was heartwarming. The issues addressed in-

cluded AFDC, Medicaid, Child Care Services, the Maine Health Program, the ASPIRE program, and the voices of representatives of the Maine Women's Lobby were heard across the state — including the hearings in Fort Kent and Calais.

The Appropriations Committee is currently holding hearings with the heads of state agencies to determine
see **BUDGET** on page 2

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Non-Traditional Occupations in limelight

Representative Anne Rand of Portland is sponsoring a bill that would open the door for women who want to work in NTOs ("non-traditional occupations", defined as those in which less than 25% of the workforce is female). This bill would require that 25% of the state and federal funding allocated to the Maine Department of Labor for training would be used for the recruitment, training, and placement of women in non-traditional jobs. The programs that would be covered include: JTPA (Joint Training and Partnership Act), STAR (the Strategic Training for

Accelerated Reemployment program), and MTI (the Maine Training Initiative program). This bill would also include a provision which would require that contractors who benefit from money approved with state bonds offer non-traditional opportunities to women.

Women find many roadblocks to getting jobs in NTOs — from the first message that "you wouldn't be interested in one of those jobs," to a lack of training opportunities. Those come even before considering the prob-

see **NTOs** on page 2

NTOs . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lems encountered in the workplace including:

- the reluctance of employers to hire women;
- lack of child care opportunities;
- and, the initial expense of equipment and tools.

Historically, and not surprisingly, NTOs usually provide higher wages than those positions traditionally held by women. Under this legislation, unemployed and under-employed women would be provided the opportunity to learn marketable skills and enter the job market at a decent wage, with the potential for long-term employment.

The Lobby is excited about this bill, not only because of the direct economic effect it would have on individual women, but also because it will highlight some fundamental inequities of the current job market and — hopefully — encourage women across the state to consider NTO options.

The hearing on this bill will probably be scheduled for the end of February. If you are interested in testifying or wish more information on this bill, please call Mary McPherson at 622-0851.

Welcome to three new board members

MWL would like to welcome the following women to our Board of Directors:

LIBBY SEGERS of Coopers Mills

ANN MITCHELL of Waterville

LEE LONGNECKER of Portland

All three have expressed their eagerness to work and we'll take them up on it!

BUDGET . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the feasibility of each proposed reduction or change. Your legislators need to hear from you — to hear that there is support for programs that affect women and that you do not believe the budget can be balanced on the backs of the people least able to pay. While it is impossible to summarize all the proposed cuts here, two cuts which must be highlighted involve the AFDC program. McKernan's budget proposal would:

1) deny increased benefits to mothers who have additional children while on AFDC, a punitive action without precedent in Maine; and

2) reduce benefits for AFDC recipients who currently have employment — however minimal — or receive child support from an absent parent.

Both these proposals will place low-income children at a greater risk. A family receives only \$116 per month (approximately \$3.90/day) for an ad-

ditional child, certainly not an incentive for having a baby. The second proposal would penalize working families and would result in the state keeping child support paid by absent parents.

If you would like further information on the budget, please contact Mary McPherson at the Lobby office (622-0851.)

To contact your legislators:

Senator _____
or Rep. _____
Maine State House
State House Station #2
Augusta, ME 04333

To leave a message for your Senator:

1-888-423-6900
or 289-1540

To leave a telephone message for your Representative:

1-800-423-2900
or 289-1400

The Maine Women's Lobby Newsletter is the official publication of the Maine Women's Lobby. **Eleanor Goldberg**, Chair; **Mary McPherson**, Executive Director/Lobbyist.

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Roe V. Wade

"Breakfast of Champions"

a success!

by **BARBARA REINERTSON**
MWL Board Member

Our second annual Breakfast of Champions, held in Portland on the 19th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, January 22, was a big success.

Approximately 85 people attended the breakfast — an increase from last year. The Democratic Presidential candidates were attending a Choice event in Washington, and President Bush sent his regrets (!), but representatives of several of the Democratic campaigns did attend, did listen to our speakers, and did provide information on where their candidates stood on the issues of special importance to women. President Bush, as you know, is anti-choice, has appointed anti-choice justices to the Supreme Court, and would veto a National Freedom of Choice Act.

Our own speakers were outstanding, as the audience made clear with their applause, comments, and compliments following the breakfast. There was an opportunity for questions and a good give-and-take among those attending, and there was a strong sense of commitment, determination, and strength in numbers!

Unfortunately, the immediate news is not good. As Betsy Mahoney, chair of the **Choice Coalition**, pointed out, the Supreme Court's announcement that it will review the restrictive Pennsylvania abortion law without

ruling on Roe or the constitutionality of abortion itself, could be seen as purely a political move in this election year, (see story page 6.) In reality, if the Court upholds any of Pennsylvania's restrictions (24-hour waiting period, parental consent, provider reports, and husband notification) it means that states could be allowed to do everything but ban abortion outright, and Roe will no longer be the law of the land.

And Maine is not exempt from concern. We have two restrictive abortion laws that have been in limbo for many years, but whose status is far from clear should the Supreme Court change the ground-rules. As Mary McPherson, new Executive Director of the Maine Women's Lobby pointed out in her speech, while NARAL currently ranks Maine the 14th least likely state to enact harsh anti-abortion laws, many lawmakers are choosing not to run for reelection, and the composition and

pro-choice sentiments of the Legislature could change dramatically next year.

As MWL Board Member Karen Heck said in her remarks (page 4), we all need to question state and national candidates carefully about their positions on freedom of choice, and to work actively to elect those who represent our views. And "pro-choice" isn't enough; we need to make sure politicians won't vote for restrictive bills or amendments on waiting periods, parental consent, or husband notification.

Excerpts from our speakers' remarks follow. Thanks to them, and to all who supported or attended the breakfast. We received such an enthusiastic response that we are considering "taking the show on the road" to other Maine towns and cities. If you are interested in helping to organize a Freedom of Choice discussion/event in your area, please contact the Lobby office.

Coming in May 17 - June 18

MAINE WOMEN ARTISTS

a show hosted by the **Maine Women's Lobby**
in conjunction with **Gallery House at Holly Hill**
in Nobleboro

Mark your calendar for the special MWL reception on May 17 from 2-4 p.m.

CHOICE:

"It's time to make our voices heard and our votes count . . ."

(The following remarks were made by Karen Heck, MWL Board Member, at the Breakfast of Champions on January 22)

Ronald Reagan and George Bush are about to celebrate the culmination of their 12 year effort to send women back to our kitchens, barefoot and pregnant.

They have targeted poor women, young women, and less well-educated women, thinking, perhaps, they could get away with these attempts because they are not a strong voting block. It's time to stop this outrage.

What follows is a sampling of the policies pursued by the Reagan and Bush administrations and actions we need to undertake to reverse their devastating effects.

I'm sure you are all familiar with the so-called Gag Rule. It's the Reagan policy recently upheld by the Supreme Court that prohibits family planning clinics from mentioning the A word. It essentially relegates low-income women to a lower standard of health care than those who can afford to see a private doctor. These regulations affect four million women who are served in Title X funded clinics.

With the help of 41 democrats who voted with the President, the Congress was unable to override his veto of a bill nullifying the provisions of the Gag Rule.

Currently, the regulations are in limbo somewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services. They haven't been issued yet because the White House is trying to win the votes of both the anti-choice conservatives and the moderate Republicans in November.

On the one hand, George Bush can applaud the Supreme Court's decision and on the other, he can delay implementation until after the election.

The foreign equivalent to the Gag Rule is the Mexico City policy also initiated by the Reagan administration and supported by Bush. The Mexico City policy prohibits any US family planning funds from being given to international family planning agencies that discuss abortion or perform abortions.

The administration has also with-

"I'm sure you are all familiar with the so-called Gag Rule. . . . It essentially relegates low-income women to a lower standard of health care than those who can afford to see a private doctor"

held \$20 million from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities — a worldwide family planning organization the U.S. helped to found in 1969.

The money has been withheld since 1985 when Ronald Reagan used the UNFPA as a scapegoat for Chinese government population policies he alleged included "coercive" abortion. Two State Department investigations have, however, failed to uncover any UNFPA links to coercive practices, and UNFPA funds have never been used for abortion services.

Congress has tried many times to nullify these administrative decisions, so far, thanks to the votes of anti-choice democrats, without success.

It has also been unsuccessful in overturning a Department of Defense regulation that prohibits abortions at military facilities overseas. Language that would have permitted American service women or dependents serving overseas to obtain abortions at military facilities was recently stripped from the DOD authorization and appropriation bills due to the threat of a presidential veto.

Native American women are similarly unable to have abortions in the government hospitals which serve them.

Low income women in the District of Columbia are unable to get financial assistance for abortions there even though the District voted to use its own funds to provide those abortions. That's because Congress was unable to override the president's veto.

What has been the result of 12 years of presidential leadership that denies women have the right to control our own bodies?

Decreasing access to services.

More and more doctors are choosing not to perform abortions and fewer and fewer residents are choosing to learn the procedure because of the controversy and risks.

Between 1982 and 1988 the number of abortion providers in the US declined by 9%. Eighty-three percent of all US counties lack an abortion provider, but those counties are home to 31% of all American women age 15-44.

. . . Karen Heck analyzes issues at Breakfast of Champions

Only 43% of the abortion facilities in the country provide services after the 12th week of pregnancy. In Maine, there is only one provider who does abortions until the 14th week. After the 14th week, women must travel to Boston.

Not content with an assault on abortion rights, the anti-choice movement has increased its attacks on contraception.

Family planning programs now receive \$20 million less in funding than they did 10 years ago, and there is still no major funding for contraceptive research.

Consider the comments of Judie Brown, president of the American Life League and an active anti-choice advocate, "I think it's a justified concern that if a state, municipality or federal government were to outlaw abortion, then anything that causes the killing of a child in the womb would be outlawed . . . contraceptive methods that kill babies simply would not be available."

She's talking about the pill and the IUD — methods used by the majority of women in this country.

The anti-choice agenda victimizes women in yet another way. Their efforts to keep RU 486 out of this country may be costing women's lives.

While it's best known for its ability to induce menstrual bleeding, there are strong indications that RU 486 may be indicated as a treatment for breast cancer. Two hundred women die each year in Maine alone from breast cancer, and any drug that is useful in that battle deserves to be

tested.

In addition to breast cancer deaths, the World Health Organization estimates that in developing countries over 200,000 women each year are dying from illegal abortions.

Policies pursued by this government are directly contributing to these deaths.

We cannot let this continue.

We must make our voices heard and our votes count.

It's time to elect policy makers who understand that women in this country will not go back to the days of

"What has been the result of 12 years of presidential leadership that denies women have the right to control our own bodies?"

Decreasing access to services"

back alleys. We need a president who will overturn the policies of this administration.

It's time to elect candidates who understand that women are fundamentally unable to achieve equality unless they have control of their reproductive lives.

And, it's not enough for them to be pro-choice, in addition, we want candidates whose platform for economic recovery does not rest on getting mothers off welfare, but rather rests on the understanding that women have valuable contributions to make but need child care, health insurance,

flex-time, and adequate pay for making those contributions.

We need to find out where presidential candidates, Congressional candidates, and candidates for the Maine legislature stand on these issues. Obviously this won't be easy — judging from the turnout of candidates today, these aren't issues that are high on their list of priorities. We need to make them a priority.

We need to ask them not just whether they say they support a woman's right to decide, but how they would vote on funding for abortions for low-income women and whether they understand the dangers of parental consent legislation.

Congressional candidates should be asked if they would become co-signers of the Freedom of Choice Act.

Presidential candidates should be asked whether they would sign the Freedom of Choice Act.

The Freedom of Choice Act currently in Congress would prohibit any state legislature from interfering with a woman's right to choose. Representatives Snowe and Andrews and Sen. Cohen are co-sponsors of this legislation.

Senator Mitchell has not yet signed on. He needs to hear from us that state legislatures are not the places for this issue to be decided. Can you even imagine this issue being decided by 50 states if unplanned pregnancy affected men's lives the way it does women's?

Without a Freedom of Choice

see **CHOICE** on page 6

Implications of Supreme Court action examined at MWL's Breakfast of Champions

(The following was adapted from remarks by **Betsy Mahoney** at MWL's Breakfast of Champions on January 22.)

The United States Supreme Court has announced that it will review Pennsylvania's restrictive abortion law but will not consider the constitutionality of abortion or, apparently, overturn Roe completely.

WHAT IS THE PENNSYLVANIA CASE?

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey challenges amendments to Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act. This restrictive law provides for:

- husband notification;
- informed parental consent;
- biased patient counseling

followed by a mandatory 24-hour waiting period;

- a vague, narrow definition of the medical emergency exception to the law; and
- oppressive reporting requirements for abortion providers

"The Supreme Court's Jan. 21 announcement was highly unusual"

A lower federal court upheld all but the husband notification provision. Pro-choice petitioners and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had asked that the case be considered for review by the Supreme Court.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COURT'S DECISION TO REVIEW THE CASE?

In deciding the Pennsylvania case, the Court could create a new, more lenient standard of review of state abortion laws, making it possible for states to do everything but ban abortion completely.

The Supreme Court's Jan. 21 announcement was highly unusual. When considering the petitions to review a case, the high court generally states only that it will or will not review the case. By saying that it will not consider the constitutionality of abortion, the Court appears to be dodging a complete overturn of Roe V. Wade in a presidential election year.

CHOICE (continued)

Act, in addition to fifty different responses to the question "Who decides?", we risk women with resources being able to travel to states where abortion rights are protected, while low-income women resort to back alleys.

That scenario is simply unacceptable.

We also need to find what candidates, if elected, would do to make RU 486 available to women in this country.

What would they do about the Mexico City policy, UNFPA funding, and the Gag Rule? Will they just

rescind them, or will they also increase funding for family planning services for low-income women. What better way to reduce the need for abortion than to increase funding for prevention?

Once we know where candidates stand, we need to educate others — through letters to the editor, speaking out at gatherings, going to caucuses.

We need to support with time and money candidates who are pro-choice and who understand our concerns. If we cannot find candidates to support, we need to become candidates ourselves.

We need to do these things now and not stop doing them until we win.

This is not radical politics we're talking about here.

We are asking for the right to decide who controls our bodies. It's a right no man would think he was without.

We're asking for the opportunity to make every child a wanted child.

It's time to make our voices heard and our votes count . . .

We cannot go back . . .

we will not go back . . .

and now is the time to prove it.

Gender bias found in Maine schools

by **BARBARA REINERTSON**
MWL Board Member

It's no news to many of us, but a nationally publicized report this week found that girls are treated differently from boys in public schools, receive a lower quality education, and end up behind in math, science, and self-esteem.

The American Association of University Women sponsored the study by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. It found that:

- Teachers pay less attention to girls. They listen when boys call out answers, but admonish girls to "raise your hand if you want to speak."
- Sexual harassment of girls by boys is increasing.
- Boys are more likely to receive college scholarships than girls with equal or slightly better grades.
- Girls are frequently stereotyped or overlooked in courses of study.
- Girls are closing the gap in math, but not in science.
- Girls' self-esteem drops by nearly 40% between elementary and high school, compared with a 20% drop for boys.

it's MWL's annual

COCKTAIL PARTY

Thursday,
March 5, 1992
5-7 p.m.
The Senator
Western Avenue
Augusta
\$20

GREAT CONVERSATION,
GREAT HOR D' OUEVRES,
GREAT PEOPLE.

AAUW's Education Foundation President, Alice McKee, said the report "presents compelling evidence that girls are not receiving the same quality, or even quantity, of education as their brothers."

The Women's Development Institute, MWL's sister organization, is writing for a copy of the report and its recommendations for action. Any MWL member who is interested in gender bias in schools is encouraged to call or write WDI chair Ellen Golden, c/o MWL/WDI Office, P.O. Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347.

Great Escapes drawing raises \$4,000 for MWL

The drum rolled (figuratively, at least) when the winners of the Great Escapes Drawing were drawn at the Breakfast of Champions on January 22. And the winners are:

Two nights for two at the Pointed Fir Bed & Breakfast in Tenants Harbor — PENELOPE BEHRENS, Freedom
Tickets for two to a Boston Celtics game — JAN COLLINS, Biddeford

One night at Maine Back Roads Bed & Breakfast in Wells — PETER WHITE, East Winthrop

All-day sail for two in Muscongus Bay — LYNN

GOLDFARB, Portland

Special thanks to Janet Shea of Pointed Fir B&B; Alice Schleiderer and Joe Hardy of Maine Back Roads B&B; Ron Phillips, Executive Director of Coastal Enterprises Inc., who donated the day sail; and to MWL chair Eleanor Goldberg who donated the Celtics tickets.

Also, thanks to the many MWL members and friends who so generously bought tickets in support of this fundraiser. And thanks to Marguerite Ridgway and Dorcas Miller, MWL Board members, for coordinating this year's Great Escapes Drawing!



Legislative Update

by **MARY McPHERSON**
MWL Executive Director

The following is a summary of the bills which, unless otherwise noted, are supported by the MWL. The degree of our support ranges from top-priority measures, for which the Lobby will take a lead role in advocating and organizing support (such as the Non-Traditional Occupations Act), to other bills on which we'll provide written and/or oral testimony, attend committee work sessions, and lobby as necessary.

BILLS CARRIED OVER FROM THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION:

L.D. 345 An Act Relating to Surrogate Parenting

Sponsors: Rep. Susan Dore of Auburn, Rep. Judy Paradis of Frenchville, Rep. Connie Cote of Auburn, Sen. Judy Kany of Kennebec.

Committee: Judiciary.

Summary: Proposes to make surrogate parenting contracts (for pay) illegal and non-binding in Maine.

MWL position: Neither for nor against.

Status: Voted out of Committee Ought Not To Pass.

L.D. 513 AA Requiring the Provision of Information to Victims of Gross Sexual Assault

Sponsors: Rep. George Townsend of Eastport, Sen. Harry Vose of Washington.

Committee: Judiciary.

Summary: Proposed to require, upon request of the victim, HIV testing of an individual convicted of gross sexual assault.

MWL position: Opposed, since such information is of little value to the victim and improperly uses resources that can instead support direct services to the survivor.

Status: Under committee review.

L.D. 701 AA to Provide Community Rating of Health Insurance Providers

Sponsors: Rep. Charlene Rydell of Brunswick, Sen. Beverly Bustin of Kennebec, Rep. Harriet Ketover of Portland, Speaker John Martin of Eagle Lake.

Committee: Banking and Insurance.

Summary: Under present law, commercial, for-profit insurers are permitted to "experience" rate health insurance premiums based on age, gender, family status, occupation, etc., placing the employers of older workers, women of child bearing age, and others at a financial disadvantage. This proposes that health insurers providing coverage to groups with fewer than 25 employees or to self-employed individuals be prohibited from "experience" rating or varying rates based on age, gender, or claims experience. This bill was initiated by the Consumers for Affordable Health Care coalition, of which the MWL is a partner member.

Status: A divided report is anticipated out of Committee. The majority report will favor Community Rating and is supported by MWL.

L.D. 1630 AA to Require Gender Impact Analysis as part of all Audit and Program Reviews

Sponsors: Sen. Dale McCormick of Kennebec, Sen. Gerard Conley of Cumberland, Rep. Mary Cathcart of Orono.

Committee: Audit and Program Review.

Summary: Under the current "sunset review" law, all state departments and agencies are required to submit justification reports on existing programs and services. This measure would require those departments to include in their reports an analysis of the impact policies, programs, and budget cuts/expansions have on women and men.

Status: Voted out of Committee Ought Not To Pass, but will be incorporated into another Committee bill.

L.D. 1693 AA to Protect Telephone Customer Privacy

Sponsors: Rep. Herbert Adams of Portland, Rep. Hugh Morrison of Bangor, and Rep. Herbert Clark of Millinocket.

Summary: As amended, this bill allows telephone customers to "block" the dissemination of their telephone number on a call-by-call basis in areas of the state in which "Caller I.D." is offered to telephone customers. In addition, per-line blocking must be offered to individuals, agencies, and groups that submit a written request to the telephone utility asserting a specific need for per-line blocking for reasons of health and safety. The first per-line blocking and unblocking must be provided to subscribers without charge. A first in the country, this legislation is particularly important for battered women and volunteers who work with the domestic violence and rape crisis coalitions.

Status: Voted out of Committee — Ought to Pass As Amended.

LD 1834 AA Creating the Victim's Compensation Board

Sponsors: Rep. Mary MacBride of Presque Isle, Sen. Donald Collins of Aroostook, Rep. John Richards of Hampden, and Rep. Andrew Ketterer of Madison.

Committee: Judiciary

Summary: This bill would create a new Victim's Compensation Board which would award compensation of up to \$5,000 to victims. Funds would be raised by adding an assessment to fines paid by individuals convicted of crimes — \$25 for felonies, \$10 for misdemeanors.

Status: Under Committee review. Expected to be voted out of Committee 9-4 — Ought To Pass as Amended.

BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION:

LD 2040 AA To Increase the Penalties for Committing Repeated Assault

Sponsors: Rep. Mary Cathcart of Orono, Sen. Muriel Holloway of Lincoln, Rep. John Richards of Hampden, and Rep. Patricia Stevens of Bangor.

Committee: Judiciary

Summary: Currently, assault is a Class D crime. This bill proposes to increase the class level by one class

in each instance if the person committing the assault has two or more prior convictions for assault within the immediately preceding five years.

Status: Under Committee review.

LD 2098 AA to Reform Unemployment Compensation Guidelines in Maine

Sponsors: Rep. Anne Rand of Portland, Rep. Edward McHenry of Madawaska

Committee: Labor

Summary: The current method for calculating an employee's eligibility for unemployment compensation is to review the employee's income during the "base period" — the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters. This proposes to provide an alternative calculation based on the last quarter's earnings or, in some cases, the current quarter's.

Status: Under Committee review.

LD 2221 AA to Limit to the District Court the Authority to Issue Orders in Domestic Abuse Cases

Sponsors: Rep. Francis Marsano of Belfast, Rep. John Richards of Hampden, and Sen. Pamela Cahill of Sagadahoc.

Committee: Judiciary

Summary: Currently, protective orders in abuse cases may be issued either in District Court or Superior Court. This proposes that, while the Superior Court could still grant a protective order to a battered woman, all protective orders would have to be issued by the District Court. An amendment, introduced by Rep. Mary Cathcart of Orono, would amend the activities which can be enjoined by a temporary and permanent protective order to make them consistent.

MWL Position: Opposed to bill, as it has the potential to slow down the time it would take for a battered woman to be granted a temporary restraining order or, if the other party received an order first, could even preclude her being granted a temporary order; MWL supports the amendment

Status: Under Committee review.

AA to Create a Non-Traditional Occupations Act for Women

This bill has not been printed yet. See article on page 1.

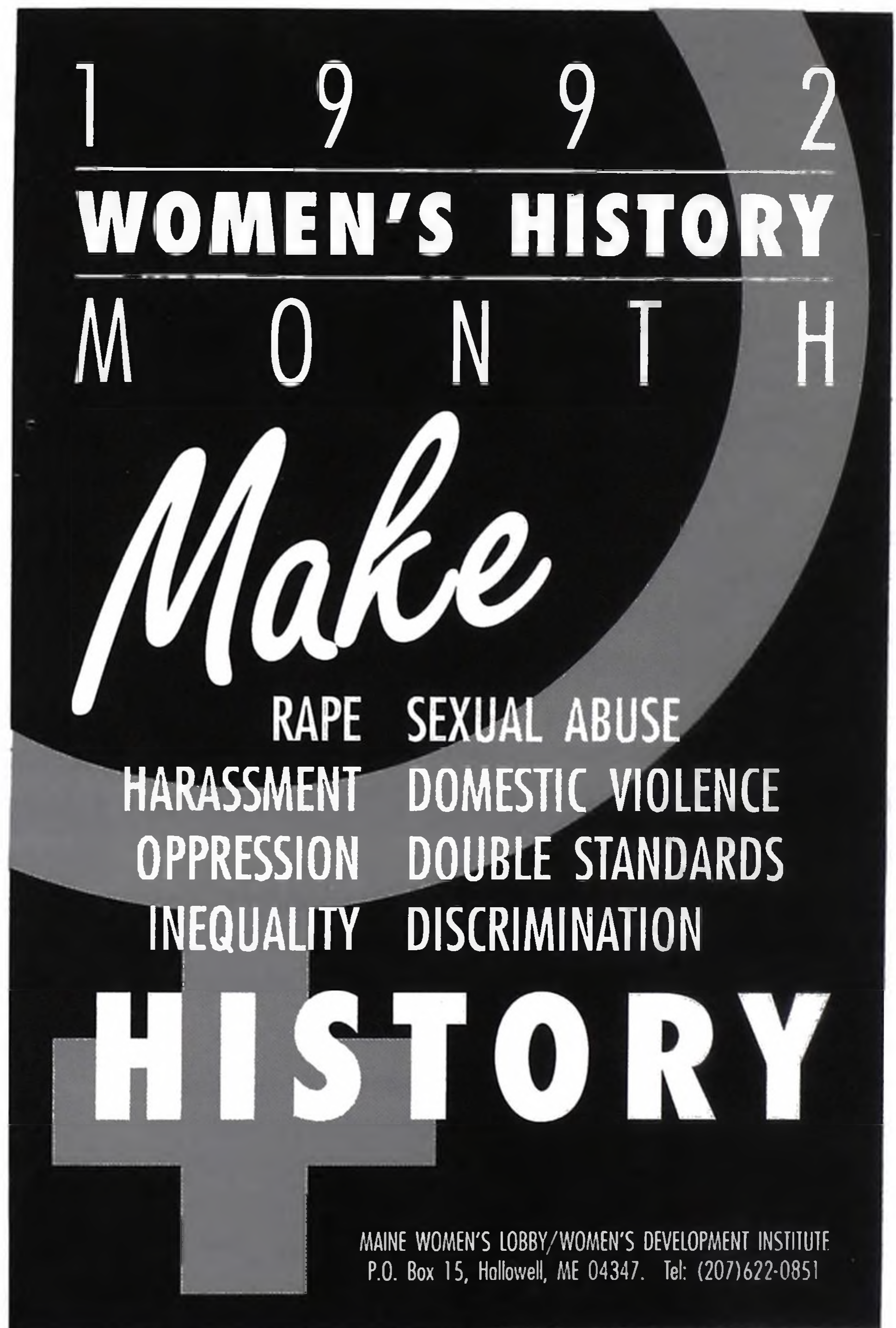
Maine Women's Lobby/
Women's Development Institute

Women's History Month

Poster

To celebrate Women's History Month in March, MWL and WDI have designed this must-have poster. Despite its timeliness, this stunning poster (in fuchsia and silver on black) is obviously one for all seasons.

Use the attached form to order yours now, while supplies last. The cost is \$10 per poster plus \$2.50 handling.



Return order form with check to:

Women's Development Institute
P.O. Box 15
Hallowell, ME 04347

Name: _____

Mailing address _____

City/ST/Zip _____

NUMBER OF POSTERS: _____ x \$10 \$ _____

+ \$2.50 handling \$ _____

Phone number _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Choice Coalition and Senator Mitchell discuss Freedom of Choice Act

by KAREN HECK
MWL Board Member

Eight people representing member organizations of the **Choice Coalition** met with Senator Mitchell in Augusta on February 12 to talk with him about his reluctance to sign on to the Freedom of Choice Act currently in Congress. The Freedom of Choice Act would codify the protections of Roe and keep the states from chipping away at our right to choose.

What he had to say was helpful. It clearly brought home the obstacles we face in fighting for equality and justice in a body as rarified as the United States Senate. While I continue to hope that Senator Mitchell will undertake a leadership role in securing the protections of Roe for women throughout the nation, whether he does or not, we have an enormous task ahead of us.

As to whether he will sign on, Sen. Mitchell said he had some concerns about the language of the bill which his staff was working to clarify. He said that he would schedule the bill for floor action when it was ready, and that he would vote for it. He speculated that the timing would probably be after the Supreme Court announces its decision in the Pennsylvania case.

He also spoke of his concerns for the fate of the bill in the Senate. Possible outcomes include the attachment of debilitating amendments. Amendments he believes would pass, such as parental consent, informed consent, and mandatory waiting periods, would leave some states, including Maine, worse off than they currently are.

While our first reaction may be that those amendments would never pass, it's crucial to remember the people voting on them are the same men who confirmed Clarence Thomas and who have no conception about what it's like for poor women or teens in dysfunctional families to get through a day.

Parental consent? Who wouldn't want to know their daughter was about to have an abortion? (More than 80% of the teens who get abortions do talk to their parents, but you can't mandate good communication and the judicial by-pass system does not provide support to a teen in a dangerous family situation.)

Informed consent? What's wrong with that? (Nothing, and doctors already do it with all surgical procedures.

In the case of informed consent legislation however, doctors are required to read a script designed only to dissuade the patient from having the abortion.)

Required waiting periods? What's the problem with a waiting period? (There already is a waiting period. No one walks into a doctor's office, finds out she's pregnant, and leaves having had an abortion. There is plenty of time between the test and when an abortion gets scheduled for a woman to consider her decision. Mandated waiting periods, however, require two visits for the abortion. Since abortion providers are few and far between — there's only one in the entire state of North Dakota — the costs of travel and an overnight stay are often prohibitive for women who can hardly afford the cost of the procedure.)

It's not just United States senators who ask these questions. Polls show many people don't understand the problems each of these issues presents until they are educated as to the harmful consequences.

Our immediate task, in addition to checking out the Maine delegation's position on these issues, is to educate the public and to work to elect those who are truly pro-choice this coming November.

The ANNUAL APPEAL needs YOU!

You may have received our Annual Appeal in the past few weeks. (If you haven't, don't worry — there will be a second mailing this spring.) Please consider this a friendly reminder to make as generous a contribution as you can. We really depend on your support. Thanks! We appreciate whatever you are able to give.

I want to help improve the lives of
Maine women and their families!

- ☐ Here's my \$25 for an individual membership
- ☐ I prefer to join at the level below:

REGULAR

- ☐ \$500 Life
- ☐ \$250 Sustaining
- ☐ \$100 Sponsoring
- ☐ \$ 50 Supporting
- ☐ \$ 25 Individual
- ☐ \$1-24 Other

PLEDGE

- ☐ Total annual pledge \$_____
- I prefer to pay:
- \$_____ monthly
- \$_____ every other month
- \$_____ quarterly
- \$_____ twice per year



P.O. Box 15, Hallowell Maine 04347

Name _____ Phone _____ Business _____
Address _____ Town _____ Zip _____

- ☐ I do not want my name given to other groups.

The Maine Women's Lobby is committed to representing women of all economic means.
Any contribution you are able to make will entitle you to membership. Please make your check
payable to: Maine Women's Lobby and return it with this card

- ☐ I am already a member. Please use
the enclosed contribution of \$_____
to advocate on behalf of Maine women
and their families.

THANK YOU and WELCOME!

----- DETACH HERE -----



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