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Maine NOW Times (Spring 1997)

National Organization for Women - Maine Chapter Staff

National Organization for Women - Maine Chapter

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Dear Feminist Friends,

In this issue, we've decided to concentrate on proposed state legislation because it is that time of year when we all need to take responsibility for the policies being made in Augusta -- policies that intimately affect our lives and the lives of our neighbors. As always, there's more information to share with you than can possibly fit into these twelve pages.

Please find a little time in your busy lives to take action. Choose at least one area of concern: abortion rights, family planning, other health care issues, lesbian/gay rights, domestic violence, or economic justice. Then choose at least one thing you can do to help make a difference. We are the government only if we choose to make it so.

TODAY!! I will make a difference by:

- Calling my legislator
- Writing my legislator
- Making an appointment to speak with my legislator
- Lobbying my legislator in person at the State House
- Attending a legislative hearing
- Testifying at a legislative hearing
- Organizing one friend to do the same
- Volunteering at a Phone bank (see abortion & MLGPA)
- Writing a letter to the editor
- Sharing this newsletter with a friend
- JOINING MAINE NOW!** (see page 11)

Need information or help finding your Maine legislators:

Call Rachel Lowe 622-7524 (for abortion/family planning bills) or Chris Rusnov 873-0878/hayrus@mint.net (for other bills). Also see contacts listed with each article.

House members
287-1400 or 1-800-423-2900
Representative
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Senate members
287-1540 or 1-800-423-6900
Senator
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Governor Angus King
287-3531/fax 287-1034
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

To find out the
LD number of a bill,
and
get an update on the
status of bills
call
287-1692

**SEE PAGE 7 FOR A LIST OF
MEMBERS OF KEY LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**

If one of your legislators is on any of these committees,
it is doubly important that you take the time to educate them
on the issues &/or thank them for their support.
You'll be amazed at how influential you, as a constituent, can be.



**MAINE
NOW
TIMES
SPRING 1997**

**UPCOMING
LEGISLATIVE
PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Welfare Reform Bills
Mon. MARCH 24**

9:30 am
Health & Human Services Committee
Room 113

LD 1116
**An Act to Prevent Discrimination
Tues., APRIL 8**

1:30 pm
Judiciary Committee
Augusta Civic Center

Women's Health at Risk

Family Planning and Abortion Rights Under Attack Again!

The following information was taken from the Family Planning Association of Maine's Legislative Alert. It was written by Rachel Lowe, FPA External Affairs Associate, who is also Maine NOW State Coordinator.

The 118th legislature is well under way -- promising to be the most challenging session for family planning in many years. There will be a number of occasions when we will need you to call the members of the Health and Human Services Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee as well as your local legislators. If you do not know who your legislator is *call Rachel immediately at 622-7524.*

Family Planning Budget - UPDATE

As a result of a 15% across-the-board cut in all state contracts, family planning suffered a \$75,000 reduction in Governor King's proposed '98-'99 biennial bud-

get. A public hearing before the Health & Human Services Committee was held on January 14th, where FPA made the case that family planning represents a cost-effective investment of state dollars, and that Maine is reaping tangible benefits: thanks in great part to the Legislature's long-standing support, Maine has the third lowest teen pregnancy rate in the nation; experienced the sharpest decline in teen births between 1991-'95; and has the highest rate of oral contraceptive use among teens, even though our young folks are no more sexually active than teens in other states. Further, with every \$1 in public funds translating to a long-term savings of \$4.40 in public assistance-related services, committee members agreed, and voted unanimously to pass along to the Appropriations Committee a recommendation that the \$75,000 cut be restored to ensure flat-funding for the family planning system. **Health & Human Services Committee members deserve our hearty thanks, and Appropriations Committee members our strong encouragement to keep Maine a leader in our nation's family planning success stories!** The Appropriations Committee will not be making a final decision until late spring, so please contact your legislators today if s/he serves on that committee. *(MNT ed. note: If your legislator is not on the AC, contact them and ask them to lobby the AC members for their support.)*

Family Planning Bills

LD 122 Rep. Adam Mack R-Standish
An Act to Repeal the Funding for the Family Planning Association of Maine

LD112 Rep. Ahearne D-Madawaska
An Act to Prohibit Family Planning Agencies from Using State Funds for Certain Expenses Related to Abortion Services

Ed. note: These bills had a public hearing before the Health & Human Services Committee on February 25th. They voted unanimously "ought NOT to pass". Congratulations to FPA staff and all the advocates who educated committee members. This committee's vote renders the bills virtually dead unless a 2/3 vote to reconsider them can be garnered in both the House and Senate.

Attempts to gravely compromise abortion access through onerous restrictions and punitive laws, and an attempt to defund the FPA and family planning services are on the horizon. Your voice at the legislature is our most successful way to reach law makers who are undecided.

The vast majority of Mainers are pro-choice and pro-family planning, but we need to get the word out to the NEW legislature!

During March, it is particularly important to contact your legislators if they serve on one of the three Committees: Health & Human Services, Judiciary, or Appropriations & Financial Affairs.

Maine Alternative Yellow & Green Pages#4

Yellow/directory of non-profit, progressive groups in Maine: Green/socially & environmentally responsible businesses
\$9/one copy, \$7.50/2-9, \$6/10+.

Includes postage & handling.

INVERT,
Box 776, Monroe, ME 04951
525-7776

Abortion Access Bills

All bills listed below have been referred to the **Judiciary Committee**, scheduled for public hearing in Augusta on **Wednesday March 5th**. By the time you read this, the hearing date will have passed. And while many individuals and organizations will have presented strong arguments against these bills, it is critical that you **contact your legislators, especially if they are members of the Judiciary Committee**. Let them know that...

**MAINE WOMEN SHOULD BE
TRUSTED
OUR HEALTH AND PRIVACY
MUST BE PRESERVED!!**

LD 4 Ahearne An Act to Preserve the Life of Viable Fetuses.

Description: Severely restricts later term abortions by requiring a physician to select a method of abortion most likely to result in a live fetus, regardless of the risks it may pose to the woman's health or future fertility. It further requires the presence of a pediatrician, mandating the second physician to extend the life of the fetus, even in cases of severe or profound fetal anomaly. The mandate would override the discretion and decision-making authority of the parents as well.

LD 57 Ahearne An Act to Strengthen the Laws Governing the Failure to Preserve the Life of a Live-born Person.

Description: A companion bill to LD 4, this measure elevates the standard of care required to maintain a live born fetus; imposes a criminal penalty on physicians who violate the standard; and provides unprecedented judicial authority to override the wishes of parents, even in cases of severe or profound fetal anomaly.

LD 535 Ahearne. An Act to Ban Partial Birth Abortions

Description: By banning a specific procedure, this measure would prohibit physicians from choosing the most appropriate method of termination re-

*quired when a woman's health is threatened by a pregnancy, or in cases of severe or profound fetal anomaly. The bill would eliminate this option even when a woman's long-term health or future fertility is endangered, and further imposes criminal and civil penalties on physicians who violate the onerous restrictions mandated by the bill. In Maine in 1995, only **one** abortion of at least 20 weeks was performed.*

The term "partial Birth" is not a medical term, but a part of the exploitation by religious and political extremists of a very painful time in women's lives.

LD 662 Ahearne An Act to Require Parental Notification for Minors Seeking Abortions.

Description: Repeals Maine's model Adult Involvement Law, replacing it with onerous restrictions for women under 18 years of age seeking abortion, including a requirement to obtain the written consent of a parent; or notification of a parent, grandparent, or adult sibling; or permission from the district court.

LD 661 Ahearne An Act to Require a 24-hour Waiting Period Before an Abortion may be Performed.

Description: Severely restricts access to abortion services by imposing a 24-hour waiting period between the time a woman secures an appointment with a provider and receives the procedure; mandates state-scripted speeches and materials to be presented and recited to all patients regarding alternatives to abortion and information regarding fetal development, even if the patient does not request the information (current law guarantees access to such information upon the request of the woman); and repeals the 1993 Reproductive Privacy Act, which ensures that the state "shall not interfere with a woman's private decision to terminate a pregnancy before fetal viability."

If you are thinking we've already defeated most of these bills before or they are unconstitutional, you are right. And here's our chance, with the Maine Legislature nearly 50% new, to educate a whole new crop of folks who probably don't study feminism in their spare time. JoAnne Dauphinee, Greater Bangor NOW coordinator and long-time Maine NOW activist and legislative historian.

Real Welfare Reform Legislation:

There's still hope, if we take ACTION!

The information in this article was taken from the M.A.I.N. Winter 1997 newsletter, Chris Hastedt and Mary Henderson of the Maine Equal Justice Project (MEJP), M.A.I.N.'s legal team, and stories collected by Chris Rusnov in her discussions with low-income people.

The following bills are being supported by the **Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods (M.A.I.N.)**, a coalition of low-income groups and advocates in Maine, that will help ease the damage created by the so-called new federal welfare reform law and help to give low-income families a chance to become self-sufficient. M.A.I.N. took the priorities identified by over 230 people in a survey on welfare reform (over half are currently on AFDC), as well as suggestions made by participants at their annual conference and worked with the MEJP to develop legislation responding to these needs.

Please read these bills carefully and think about how their passage would help families who are struggling to keep their children housed, fed and clothed, and work their way toward self-sufficiency in a system that pulls you back two steps every time you try to move one step forward.

IMAGINE:

Losing a job and not being able to find one that pays a livable wage or offers more than part time work.

Getting sick or having a sick child or spouse so you aren't able to work outside your home.

Not having safe child care or reliable transportation.

Going to school full time, being a single parent and being asked to work a job or volunteer an extra 20 hours per week.

Existing on \$412 per month for a family of three.

Getting a job and having your AFDC check reduced dollar for dollar and your food stamps cut an additional dollar, so you are thrown further into poverty.

The state keeping a lump sum retroactive child support payment finally made by the absent parent...

Imagine how changes in the law, proposed by the following bills, would give you and your family a chance.

Perhaps some of us have had these experiences or are currently in these situations. If you are willing to share your stories to help educate legislators, please contact Chris at 873-0878 (9 am - 8 pm) or the MEJP at 626-7058.

The **public hearing** before the Health and Human Services Committee on many of these bills is **Mon., MARCH 24**

starting at **9:30 am** and going throughout the afternoon. Many of these bills still do not have LD (legislative document) numbers. It's best to mention the LD number when contacting your legislator. To get final info on LD numbers and the schedule of the bills you can call Legislative Information at 287-1692 or call Chris at 873-0878 (9 am - 8 pm).

LD 445 An Act to Assist Low Income Working Parents. This bill would allow working AFDC families to continue receiving some AFDC until their earnings reach the poverty level. This bill would prevent families from "losing everything" when they go to work. This bill was already heard in February but will be taken up in the work sessions with the other bills after March 24.

LD 117 An Act to Assist Low Income Parents Obtain Access to Education. This bill creates a student aid program for AFDC recipients to give them greater access to education beyond high school.

An Act to Amend the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program. This bill provides that no family will lose their AFDC after 5 years if they are not able to find a job or otherwise unable to work. It also assures that victims of domestic violence are exempted from work requirements when necessary.

An Act to Promote Healthy Maine Families. This bill would expand Medicaid coverage to children up to 200% of the federal poverty level (\$25,960 for a family of 3), and their working or unemployed parents up to 150% of poverty (\$19,470 for a family of 3), and to

low income elderly people not already covered by Medicaid for prescription drug coverage.

LD 1021 An Act to Promote the Establishment of Individual Development Accounts by Low Income Families. This bill would allow AFDC recipients to save money for such things as educational expenses, small business expenses, down payment for a house and work-related transportation without losing their AFDC grant. Additionally, our hope is to get DHS to allow the first \$2,000 of a lump sum retroactive child support payment to be deposited in such an account. Virtually all of this money, if collected by DHS for AFDC families, is currently kept by the state.

An Act to Ensure Equal Treatment of Lawful Aliens in Providing Medical Assistance and Aid to Needy Families. This bill would require Maine to continue to provide AFDC and Medicaid to legal immigrants.

An Act to Ensure Adequate Nutrition and Support for Low Income Legal Immigrants. Federal law terminates SSI and Food Stamps for most Legal Immigrants. This bill continues that assistance with State funds.

An Act to Ensure Access to Child Support for Low Income Children. This bill allows AFDC families to continue to receive a "pass through" of the first \$50 per month of child support collected by DHS.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Hunger has proposed several pieces of legislation: raise the minimum wage, create a Maine Earned Income Tax credit; eliminate state income tax liability under \$11,000 gross annual income; changes in unemployment benefits; expanding Medicaid; more child care resources; expend school lunch program; create a food security outreach program. MCFS, P.O. Box 4503, Portland 04112 1-888-836-6388 toll free.

Turning these bills into law will require a tremendous effort from everyone who can spare an ounce of energy to help.

You can help by...

Testifying at a public hearing. The most effective testimony is short, to the point and shows the need for the bill based on personal experience. People are always nervous about standing up in front of a committee and speaking, but in the end, they are usually glad they did! You can allay some of your fear by bringing a friend to stand up with you—the buddy system! If you want to testify, we can help.

Encourage someone else who has a personal story to participate.

Write down your story, if you can't testify but want your story to be heard. We can submit it to the committee or read it for you.

Or just **come to the hearing** to show support or support someone who is testifying.

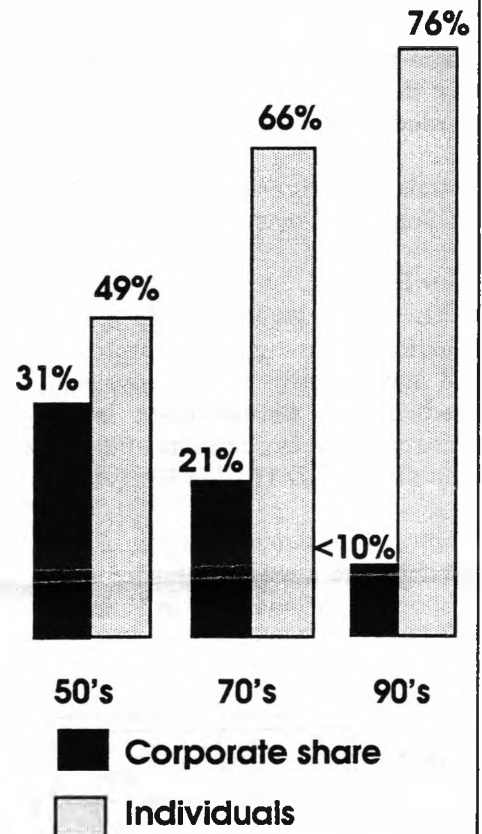
Contact your state legislators. Legislators listen most to their constituents—the people who live in their districts. We will only pass these bills if we all work together to help convince legislators that these bills are good ideas. **We need people like YOU** who will call, write or meet with legislators.

Want to testify, submit written testimony, not sure of what you can do or just have questions:

CONTACT Chris at 873-0878, 9 am - 8 pm. Written testimony can be sent to: Chris Rusnov, 11 Bolduc St., Winslow, ME 04901.

PERCENT OF FEDERAL TAX COLLECTION FROM INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS

Source: Bartlett & Steele.
America: Who Really Pays the Taxes?



"The Status of Women in Maine"

is a study describing how women fair in the Maine economy, in New England, and in the US (not very well in all cases) and in other ways such as health, political access, and reproductive rights.

Copies are available
(ask about cost)
from the

**Women's Development Institute,
PO Box 15, Hallowell ME
04347, or call 622-0851.**

XX

AN UPDATE from MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE

MLGPA, along with other progressive groups like Maine NOW, is currently lobbying against Carolyn Cosby's initiated anti-gay marriage bill. **LD 1017** is called **The Marriage and Family Protection Bill**, and if passed, this bill will prohibit same-gender couples from receiving the same legal protections accorded heterosexual couples. **LD 1017** will deny gay and lesbian couples the right to equal benefits through civil marriage.

Key Points:

Without the legal right to a civil marriage, same-gender couples do not have family health coverage, medical and bereavement leave, child custody, tax benefits and pension plans. **LD 1017 is UNFAIR!**

Same-gender couples in long-term relationships are already prohibited from contracting civil marriage in Maine. **LD 1017 is UNNECESSARY!**

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Please contact your state legislators and tell her or him to vote

**NO on LD 1017.
Leave a message
with your
representative at
1-800-423-2900
AND
senator at 1-800-423-6900.**

Unfortunately, by the time you read this, LD 1017 will have had a public hearing before the Judiciary Committee on MARCH 12. But ALL OF OUR VOICES STILL NEED TO BE HEARD!

MLGPA is also tracking this legislative session's important bills that affect the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals: An Act to Prevent Discrimination based on sexual orientation, An Act to Provide Confidentiality of Health Care Information and An Act Regarding Collection of Bias Motivation Data Through Uniform Crime Reporting.

**PUBLIC HEARING
LD 1116
Tues., April 8
1:30
Augusta Civic Center**

L.D. 1116 AN ACT TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION

This bill will finally make it illegal to discriminate against people in Maine based solely on their sexual orientation. It says that you cannot be fired from a job, evicted from an apartment, denied a loan, or turned away from a restaurant or hotel if you are, or someone just thinks you are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. **LD 1116** will provide the same protections that already exist on the basis of age, sex, race, marital status, disability, religion and national origin under the Maine Human Rights Act. Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Rhode Island have already outlawed this kind of discrimination.

Maine still has discrimination!

In a recent Maine survey, ninety-four percent of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals responding have been victims of some form of discrimination. Hate-crime statistics prove that the number of anti-gay beatings and harassment is rising throughout the state. Some victims are afraid to press charges, when it means they could be fired or evicted just for coming forward.

Special remedies, not special rights

Some people think it's their right to discriminate against lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Remember -- this kind of prejudice is still legal in the State of Maine. All across this country the religious right is battling to impose its fundamentalist doctrine on lawmakers and citizens alike. These same extremists have opposed almost every civil rights effort in the past. Now they want us all to believe that these basic human rights we seek are special.

Religious freedom will be maintained. This bill specifically says that all religious organizations are guaranteed the right to practice their faith according to their beliefs.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- ◆ **write your legislator**, urge them to support L.D. 1116
- ◆ **phone your legislator**
- ◆ **volunteer your time** Attend the **public hearing** on Tues., APRIL 8, 1:30 pm, Augusta Civic Center. On the same day, attend the **lobby training** - 8:30 am - 10:30 am Unitarian Universalist Church in Augusta. Call Rich 622-1929 for info.
- ◆ **call MLGPA** to find out when, where and how you can help with **mailings, phone calls, lobbying** etc.

**MLGPA
1-800-556-5472 or
761-3732 in Portland**

**MAINE NOW
Lesbian Task Force Chair:
Janet May 862-5907
JMAY41@maine.maine.edu**

Same Gender Marriage...

discussion continues

LD 1017, An Act to Protect Traditional Marriage and Prohibit Same Sex Marriage may have been passed by the 118th Legislature by the time you read this. However, the discussion on same gender marriage is far from over.

In the coming months, it will be interesting to see if the legislation is challenged as unconstitutional. There are a number of reasons why this may occur. First, the Supreme Court of the United States has declared marriage a fundamental right under the Constitution. Here, we are speaking of civil marriage, the legal contract recognized by the state of Maine. The ability to obtain the status of being married (accepting the rights and responsibilities of the contract) promotes stable and significant relationships between consenting adults, which enhances societal stability, something seemingly good for all of us. The right to be civilly married is a vehicle which promotes such stability. How is it then, in the best interest for the state of Maine to deny the right to marry to same gender couples? Will the state be able to articulate legitimate interests that are related to the limits that will be imposed through prohibiting same gender marriage?

The findings section of LD 1017 report that "The state has a compelling interest to nurture and promote the unique institution of traditional monogamous marriage in the support of harmonious families and the physical and mental health of children; and, that the state has the compelling interest in promoting the moral values inherent in traditional monogamous marriage."

Do these findings mean that a divorced or single parent raising children in Maine is somehow immoral or perhaps a threat to the mental health of his/her children? If this bill is an effort to legislate morality, whose morality is being served up? Do we want this in Maine?

Lesbians and gay men have and will continue to maintain long term, committed relationships. If the benefits children derive through having married parents are as great as cited in the findings, does it not follow that not allowing same gender marriage is damaging to the children of same gender couples? If the positive attributes of marriage enhance the lives/stability/productivity of heterosexual couples, can the state justify denying this right to individuals of the same gender. If so, on what grounds?

We certainly have not heard the last of this issue. For more information you can call 1-800-MLGPA or 657-6092.

*by Janet May,
Maine NOW Lesbian Rights Task Force Chair*

Key Joint Standing Committees of the Maine 118th Legislature

Health and Human Services

- Senate** Judy Paradis, Chair (D-Aroostook)
Susan W. Longley (D-Waldo)
Betty Lou Mitchell (R-Penobscot)
- House** J. Elizabeth Mitchell, Chair (D-Portland)
Joseph E. Brooks (D-Winterport)
Elaine Fuller (D-Manchester)
Thomas J. Kane (D-Saco)
Wendy Pieh (D-Bremen)
Michael W. Quint (D-Portland)
Glenys P. Lovett (R-Scarborough)*
Jeffery G. Joyner (R-Hollis)
Tarren R. Bragdon (R-Bangor)
Lois A. Snowe-Mello (R-Poland)

Judiciary

- Senate** Susan W. Longley, Chair (D-Waldo)
Lloyd P. LaFountain III (D-York)
John W. Benoit (R-Franklin)
- House** Richard H. Thompson, Chair (D-Naples)
Elizabeth Watson (D-Farmingdale)
David Etnier (D-Harpswell)
Joseph M. Jabar, Sr. (D-Waterville)
Richard H. Mailhot (D-Lewiston)
Judith A. Powers (D-Rockport)
Debra D. Plowman (R-Hampden)*
David R. Madore (R-Augusta)
Richard A. Nass (R-Acton)
G. Paul Waterhouse (R-Bridgton)

Labor

- Senate** Mary R. Cathcart, Chair (D-Penobscot)
Sharon Anglin Treat (D-Kennebec)
S. Peter Mills (R-Somerset)
- House** Pamela Henderson Hatch, Chair (D-Skowhegan)
Roland B. Samson (D-Jay)
Brian Bolduc (D-Auburn)
Joseph E. Clark (D-Millinocket)
Benjamin L. Rines, Jr. (D-Wiscasset)
Stephen S. Stanley (D-Medway)
Henry L. Joy (R-Crystal)*
Steven M. Joyce (R-Biddeford)
Robert E. Pendleton, Jr. (R-Scarborough)
Russell P. Treadwell (R-Carmel)

Appropriations and Financial Affairs

- Senate** Michael H. Michaud, Chair (D-Penobscot)
John J. Cleveland (D-Androscoggin)
Richard A. Bennett (R-Oxford)
- House** George J. Kerr, Chair (D-Old Orchard Beach)
Thomas E. Poulin (D-Oakland)
Elizabeth Townsend (D-Portland)
Kathleen Alicia Stevens (D-Orono)
Randall L. Berry (D-Livernmore)
Patricia Lemaire (D-Lewiston)
David N. Ott (R-York)*
Richard Kneeland (R-Easton)
Jean Ginn Marvin (R-Cape Elizabeth)
Tom J. Winsor (R-Norway)

HOPE Festival

(Help Organize
Peace Earthwide)

Earth Day

Sat. **APRIL 19**, 10 am - 5 pm

Brewer Auditorium

Free admission

Sponsored by the Peace & Justice Center of
Eastern Maine, **942-9343**

Organizational Fair w/60+ groups
Live Music, Theater, Dance
Awesome Children's Program
Outdoor Activities
Food, crafts, books, **Fun for All!**

Take Our Daughters To Work Day

Thurs., **April 24**

For information on how you can participate
call Kelly at the Maine Women's Lobby/
Women's Development Institute

622-0851

Plan Ahead For the Common Ground Fair

We're already planning the Maine NOW
Booth for the 1997 Common Ground Fair, **September 19-21**.

As always, we'll need volunteers to staff the
booth - selling bumper stickers and buttons, handing
out the *Maine NOW Times* and chatting with folks.
We do this work in pairs and you don't need to be an
expert on the issues. So mark your calendar.

Also, we will be gracing our booth with the
talents of our members on Saturday with **live musical performances**, five to ten minutes each hour. If
you would like one of the slots to sing or play (no
amplification - just informal fun) or would like to
volunteer for a three hour shift in the booth, call
Cynthia Phinney 778-9506.

Maine Children's Alliance
brings to Maine

Marian Wright Edelman

President of the Children's Defense Fund
the premiere U.S. advocacy group for children

Wed. **April 30, 1997**

Portland

**NOON TIME RALLY at Monument Square
(FREE)**

Come Stand for Maine Children

+ + + + +

later at Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Special reception with Marian by donors of \$250 +
4 pm - reserve by 3/11

General reception - \$25 w/food & speech by Marian
4:45 pm - reserve by 4/18

Champions for Children - 5:30 pm

Award ceremony honoring children's advocates.

Do you know a special person who sticks out their neck for
children? Let us know. You can make nominations for the
"Giraffe Awards."

To make reservations or nominate a "giraffe"
call MCA at 623-1868.

Fundraiser for the MCA whose top priority this year
is children's access to healthcare

CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS

Sen. Olympia Snowe

495 Russell SOB

Washington, D.C. 20510

(202) 224-5344

fax 202-224-1946

olympia@snowe.senate.gov

www.senate.gov/~snowe

Rep. John Baldacci

1740 Longworth HOB

Washington, D.C. 20515

202-225-6306

fax 202-225-2943

baldacci@hr.house.gov

www.house.gov/baldacci

Sen. Susan Collins

Washington, D.C. 20510

202-224-2693

fax 202-224-2693

senator@collins.senate.gov

Rep. Tom Allen

1630 Longworth HOB

Washington, D.C. 20515

202-225-6116

fax 202-225-3353

Domestic Violence Legislative Update

There are many bills pending in the Maine Legislature that may impact on battered women and their children - and it never hurts to tell your Senators or Representatives that you would like them to think about the possible ramifications of their actions on this vulnerable population.

There will be two bills specifically addressing domestic violence issues.

The first, sponsored by Elizabeth Mitchell (D-Portland) is sure to be the most controversial. It's purpose will be to bring Maine statutes in line with the federal firearms restrictions in the Violence Against Women Act. This is a critical bill as most domestic violence homicides in Maine are consistently firearms related.

The second, sponsored by Michael Saxl (D-Portland) will have a variety of components. Many are technical amendments to the statutes - affecting probation, consent, hearsay exemptions. The central piece is a proposal for a Homicide Review Panel to analyze all domestic homicide deaths in order to prevent recurrence of similar breakdowns in the system.

Please let your Legislators know your interest in domestic violence in general - and these two bills in particular.

MURDERS IN MAINE					
	'85	'89	'95		
Total number of murders	28	40	20		
Domestic violence-related	11	17	10		
Domestic Violence filings, 1990-94					
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
	3,978	4,891	5,319	5,405	5,718
Excerpt from Morning Sentinel 1/20/97					

BLUE CROSS for-profit?

DID YOU KNOW that Blue Cross of Maine which was chartered by the state Legislature in 1939 to be a charitable non-profit corporation wants to convert to a for-profit corporation causing **Maine residents to lose millions of dollars that we've invested in this insurance company through decades of tax breaks.**

DO YOU THINK Blue Cross as a condition of this conversion to a for-profit corporation **should have to set aside a portion of their assets in a foundation dedicated to charitable purposes, namely health care coverage for low-income people?**

IF YOU'RE TIRED OF YOUR TAXES SUPPORTING CORPORATE WELFARE, Write your Legislators and Governor King. Let them know what you think is a fair and just solution for non-profit health care conversion. Legislation will be presented this session so keep your eyes open. It's a hot press item too.

For more information about this and other health care related issue/legislation, contact **Joe Ditre, Maine People's Alliance, P.O. Box 2490 St., Augusta, ME 04338-2490 (207) 622-7045**

Health Care Legislation to watch for

Speaker Elizabeth Mitchell sponsored Consumers for Affordable Health Care legislation to expand Medicaid coverage for children, low income working parents and the elderly in addition to funding a program to reduce youth smoking. The bill is entitled **An Act to Improve Children's Health Care in Maine.** The expansion will be funded by an increase in the tobacco excise tax. This is a bipartisan effort with tremendous popular appeal because of the connection between health coverage and the funding source. Joe Ditre can also provide info on this bill 622-7045. **There are other bills on health care for children sponsored by other legislators. Call the Legislative Information number 287-1692.**

Although Maine NOW believes that **universal health insurance** is the best solution, we know that this is an important bill because lack of health insurance coverage is often given as a reason for families having to enter and return to AFDC. Since full time jobs at livable wages and benefits are few and far between, and "safety net" programs are under attack, we must act as a community and provide what is needed. We must however, continue to strive for a more comprehensive approach to health care and a more just economic system.

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault is supporting numerous pieces of legislation: that enhance penalties, lengthen sentencing, supervision etc for perpetrators of sexual assault; that benefits victims of sexual assault by expanding the victims rights chapter in the statutes so that victims are made aware of and understand their rights; that allows licensure for registered nurses to collect evidence thereby allowing evidence collection in a non-emergency room environment where the focus is on the victim; that makes rohypnol a Schedule 2 drug, (undetectable drug being slipped to victims prior to assault that lessens resistance & fogs the memory); and opposing legislation breaking the confidentiality of conversations recorded by Enhance 911. For more information on these bills and other related bills **contact Sue Jones, Legislative Liaison, 799-9020 or your local sexual assault response program found in your phone book.**

PORTLAND

As this news goes to press, Portland NOW is scrambling to get ready for a big planning meeting - 2/25/97. Otherwise, we had an action in support of Same Sex Marriages in January. About 8-10 members came, and made fancy Valentines Day cards which we sent, en masse, to Governor King. The cards were very creative (including 1 with candy hearts glued to the outside). Portland NOW meets usually the fourth Tuesday of the month. Call Kim Simmons 871-9786 for future events, actions and meetings.

FARMINGTON

The Farmington NOW Chocolate event was as tasty as ever, with a capella feminist singers Beth Edmonds and Cynthia Phinney providing entertainment and inspiration. In addition to the fun, we raised a bit of money for the chapter!

At press time we are looking ahead to planning some actions after our March 3 program. We will also again be co-sponsoring the Farmington Take Back the Night March and Rally with SAVES (Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services).

For more details on outcomes of the March 3 meeting, contact Chapter Coordinator Aimee DesRoches at 778-6107.

BRUNSWICK

Brunswick NOW is sponsoring a poster contest in local schools, grades 3-12, entitled "Women and Girls Who Change the World."

"Young people are struggling to identify their own goals and values in an environment that often does not foster high self esteem, especially for girls and young women. We hope the contest will interest schools who can use it as a tool to

help focus attention on the positive influence of women in our society." said Sandra Holland, Brunswick NOW coordinator.

To find out more about the contest call Kathleen at 865-3277. For upcoming NOW events, actions and meetings contact Sandra at 729-4663.

CHAPTER REPORTS

BANGOR

The next several weeks promises to be busy! A special work meeting to put our newsletter together will be scheduled for mid-to-late March. GBNOW's regular meeting, on Monday, April 14, 6pm, at the Peace & Justice Center, 128 Main St, Bangor, will be focused on several events to follow:

April 18 Take Back The Night - GBNOW will support this action organized by UM students.

April 19 HOPE Festival, Brewer Auditorium, 10am-5pm. GBNOW members will have a table, and several NOW members were among the Peace & Justice Center organizing committee for this annual festival.

April 24 Take Our Daughters to Work Day (tentative) first annual celebratory Breakfast! We hope to organize a little talk and a little fun talent to spice up this annual day for our daughters, ourselves. Please call to help, or to inquire!

May 6 International NO DIET Day Celebration - Specific event not yet planned. Please call to help, or to inquire!

May 11 Mother's Day - Another possible action day, ideas are being tossed around by NOW, Clean Clothes Campaign, P&J...

May 12 GBNOW regular planning meeting - Agenda may include update on important issues before the legislature, summer pride event(s), August 26th Women's Equality Day planning...

Looking back on the first quarter of 1997: GBNOW participated in a CUREs organized Speak Out against Violence (a call to support abortion providers and support staff) On Feb. 8, co-sponsored and helped organize "A.C.T. (Active Community Training) II - Corporate Power & Growing Inequality", Holly Sklar, speaker, at a day long presentation & workshop at UM. On Valentine's Day, GBNOW organized a performance of a one-act play, "Here Come The Brides!", in support of the right to same-gender weddings. On March 8, GBNOW was one of the organizers of "Myth America - Honoring International Women's Day", an action at the Bangor Federal Building to expose myths and lies about women & children. And, on March 10th, GBNOW showed the video, "Call To Action: '89 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives".

KENNEBEC VALLEY

KVNOW will meet on Tuesday, MARCH 25, 7 pm, at Augusta City Hall. We'll be electing officers for this year, reviewing bills in the Maine Legislature that need our action, and making plans for the next few months which we hope will include a huge yard sale to raise funds for our chapter and Maine NOW/PAC.

In December, we hosted Chris Hastedt of the Maine Equal Justice Project who gave us an update on the new federal welfare laws. In February, we viewed and discussed the pro-choice video, "Leona's Sister Gerry". It was an excellent reminder of why we must fight for our rights!

Chapter contact:
Don Craig 582-1686

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN



Maine's Leading Feminist Grassroots Organization
Phone Number: 797-8508



Maine State Coordinator - Rachel Lowe 737-2329
Assistant State Coordinator - Cynthia Phinney 778-9506
Scribe - Joyce Blakney 825-3962
Treasurer - Annie Lunt 883-1195

Task Force/Coalition Contacts

Affirmative Action Task Force - Renee Berry-Huffman 772-3368
Computer Wizards - JoAnne Dauphinee 989-3306
Consumers For Affordable Health Care-VACANCY
Dirigo Alliance - Beth Edmonds 865-3869
Lesbian Rights Task Force - Janet May 862-5907
Maine Choice Coalition - Sandra Holland 729-4663
Maine NOW Phone Coordinator - Chris Rusnov 873-0878
Maine NOW PAC Treasurer - JoAnne Dauphinee 989-3306
Maine NOW Times - Chris Rusnov 873-0878
Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition - VACANCY
Coalition for Economic Justice - Chris Rusnov 873-0878
Maine HIV Advisory Committee - Rachel Lowe 737-2329

NORTHEAST REGIONAL NOW BOARD MEMBERS

Ruth Young, Bronx, NY
Marsha Pappas, Albany, NY
Judy Murphy, Manchester Center, VT
Gerry Miller, 7320 Aqueduct Ave. #13, Bronx, NY 10468 212-367-2435
Lois Reckitt, 38 Mrytle Ave., South Portland, ME 04106 799-8744
Ellen Zucker, Boston NOW, 971 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215 617-782-1056

GREATER BANGOR NOW

87 Sunset Strip, Brewer, ME 04412
Coordinator - JoAnne Dauphinee 989-3306
Meets second Monday of each month

GREATER FARMINGTON NOW

P.O. Box 375, Farmington, ME 04938
Coordinator - Aimee DesRoches 778-6107

KENNEBEC VALLEY NOW

P.O. Box 503, Augusta, ME 04330
Contact-Don Craig 582-1686
Call for meeting schedule.

BRUNSWICK AREA NOW

P.O. Box 133, Brunswick, ME 04011
Coordinator - Sandra Holland 729-4663
Call for monthly meeting schedule.

GREATER PORTLAND NOW

P.O. Box 4012, Portland, ME 04101
Co-coordinator - Kim Simmons 871-9786
Call for meeting schedule.

E-MAIL FEMINISTS:

Cynthia Phinney cphin@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Our vision is to empower women to take feminist action to make feminist social change. Our top five priorities are: ERA, economic justice, eliminating racism, lesbian rights, and reproductive freedom. **JOIN US!**

MAINE NOW, P.O. BOX 4012, Portland, ME 04101. Make check payable to MAINE NOW.

NAME (Please PRINT) _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND (optional) _____ to help us analyze our organization's diversity.

CHAPTER (see above) _____ If there isn't a chapter near you, leave this space blank and we will enroll you as an at-large member.

Dues rate includes membership at the national, state & local level.

\$ _____ dues enclosed. \$35 Regular Dues. A sliding scale of \$20 - 34 is available, if you need it.

\$ _____ additional contribution enclosed. \$ _____ Political Action Committee contribution. Payable to Maine NOW PAC.

☐ PLEASE CHECK HERE IF YOU DO NOT WANT MAINE NOW TO SHARE YOUR NAME WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. (see Maine NOW policy below)

☐ Please check here if you do not want National NOW to share your name with other groups.

NAME SHARING POLICY: Maine NOW shares our member list for coalition work, in which we are active (see list above). We also occasionally, on a case-by-case basis, will share the list with progressive groups who are advertising events or sharing information.

"A Fine and Long Tradition of Community Leadership"

The first Congressional Resolution acknowledging the importance of remembering Women's History Week was passed in 1981. In 1987 and successive years, Congress has passed a resolution declaring March as Women's History Month.

History looks very different when we include women's stories and contributions as routinely as those of men. Women's history reveals a fine and long tradition of women's leadership - in neighborhoods and churches, within cultural groups, in families and businesses, and for the entire nation. Women's history is the story of courageous individuals shaping the world with conviction and compassion. Learning that story opens up new possibilities for our own lives and the future of our communities.

Celebrate with a child, a friend, a group ...

by reading about a special woman leader,

by honoring a woman leader in your community,

by taking action in some small way on an issue of importance to you,

by donating a book to your school library,

by asking teachers how women are being included in the curriculum everyday of the year.

RESOURCE for books, videos, games, posters, and fun materials:

National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492-8518

**March
is
WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**



Maine NOW
P.O. Box 4012
Portland, ME 04101

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