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Maine NOW Times

SUMMER 1999

MAINE NOW, PO Box 4012, Portland, ME 04101, 797-8508



The Whole Truth About the "Partial-Birth Abortion" Ban

Maine voters will face an anti-abortion referendum this Nov. 2nd. The supporters of this anti-choice effort are calling it a restriction on "partial-birth abortions." Here are the facts:

1. MAINE ALREADY HAS AN EFFECTIVE LAW. Maine's Reproductive Privacy Act prohibits post-viability abortions except in cases to save the life or health of the woman.

2. MAINE'S LAW IS WORKING. Only two third-trimester abortions have been performed in Maine during the past 14 years. Currently, there are no doctors who provide abortions past 14 weeks in pregnancy. Women do not seek abortions late in their pregnancies for trivial reasons, nor are late-term abortions legal in Maine unless the woman's life or health is at risk. Late-term abortions occur when something has gone tragically wrong with a pregnancy, most often in cases when the pregnancy was very much wanted and planned.

3. THIS PROPOSED LAW IS MORE THAN IT LOOKS LIKE.

* There is no medical term or medical procedure known as a "partial-birth abortion." The phrase was coined by anti-abortion activists as part of a federal, and now state-by-state, strategy to challenge *Roe v. Wade*.

* The proposed ban does not actually identify any particular abortion procedure or specifics regarding trimester, indication of gestational age, or fetal viability, which it intends to regulate. Contrary to what anti-abortion proponents would like us to believe, the proposed referendum is not a ban on a particular procedure, nor is it a ban on late-term abortions.

* Not only is the proposed ban unconstitutionally vague because it fails to give doctors adequate guidance as to what conduct or medical methods are prohibited, it is

also ambiguous enough to be applicable to any abortion procedure performed vaginally.

* Doctors who perform abortions, even during the first trimester (98.7% of abortions), would be criminals under this ban and face three years in jail and thousands of dollars in fines. The ban is another form of harassment designed to eliminate access to abortion by intimidating doctors. It succeeded in Wisconsin. When this ban was passed there last year, ALL abortions were cancelled until enforcement of the law could be clarified.

* The ban allows the alleged father of the fetus, if he is married to the woman, or the "maternal grandparents of the fetus," if the woman is a minor, to sue her abortion provider for unlimited pain and suffering damages.

* The ban would remove from Maine law any consideration of a woman's health in her and her doctor's decision to seek an abortion. Even if a woman's health or future fertility were in jeopardy because of a serious complication with her pregnancy, it would be illegal for her to have an abortion until her life was at stake. Again, the vagueness of the law calls into question how imminent the woman's death needs to be before her doctor could intervene.

* More than 20 states have already ruled bans that use the same or similar wording to be patently unconstitutional or have severely restricted the scope of these bans.

* Anti-abortion activists are likely to force the issue back into federal legislation. The last time Congress handled this ban, Maine's Senators Snowe and Collins were instrumental in preventing the override of President Clinton's veto of the ban. If Maine passes this ban in referendum, our senators may not maintain their position.

The whole truth about this dangerous and deceptive referendum is that it is designed to eliminate a woman's right to choose.

PLEASE REPRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE THIS FACT SHEET WIDELY

Defeating the “Partial Birth Abortion” Ban: What You Can Do

The November referendum on whether to ban so-called “Partial Birth Abortions” in Maine is one of the the most important challenges facing pro-choice citizens in the state. The issue is even more emotionally charged than many other abortion issues, and has surfaced as one which allows the anti-choice forces to swing even some of our usual allies to their side. For this reason, your “No” vote on November 2 will not be enough to defeat it.

Fortunately, there are a number of additional things you can do to help assure that the “no” votes will prevail. Maine NOW is proud of its tradition as a grassroots movement for women’s rights in this state, and we will need all the grassroots on this one!

Here are some ways you can be involved:

____ Attend, host, or facilitate a House Meeting (see related article in this issue).

____ Write a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper.

____ Volunteer to help with Phone Banking.

____ Talk with your friends, family, and co-workers about this issue.

____ Reproduce the Fact Sheet from this newsletter and circulate it widely.

____ Sign and donate for the Signature Ad (details in this newsletter), and get your friends to sign as well.

____ Volunteer for the Maine NOW Booth at the Common Ground Fair (see related article in this issue).

____ Attend Choice events occurring throughout this summer and fall (to be on an e-mail list to receive updates, send a request to cynth@gwi.net with “Choice Actions” in the subject line).

____ Contact the Campaign for Women’s Health at 842-6461.

The Campaign to Protect Women’s Health

Several NOW members have asked why Maine NOW’s name is not on the list of organizations in mailings they have received from the Campaign to Protect Women’s Health.

The Campaign to Protect Women’s Health is the coalition which was formed specifically with the goal of defeating the referendum. The members are all organizations with which Maine NOW regularly cooperates on our common goals toward keeping abortion legal, and other issues affecting women.

Because of the tremendous expense associated with the Campaign’s goal, official membership in the Campaign required a significant upfront financial contribution from member organizations, commitment of a minimum number of staff-hours per week for the duration of the campaign, and commitment to larger fundraising goals over the course of the campaign. Maine NOW is completely in support of the goals and efforts of the Campaign to

Protect Women’s Health. However, as an all-volunteer grassroots organization, we had neither the funds nor the staff to meet the membership commitment. What we do have is a base of activist members who can contribute a necessary component in seeing that the efforts of the official Campaign are successful. Members of the Campaign recognize and appreciate this.

Representatives of the Campaign for Women’s Health have met with the Maine Choice Coalition (of which Maine NOW is a member) to talk about what the campaign is doing and what the Maine Choice Coalition is involved in that will support our mutual efforts to defeat the referendum. Maine NOW, along with other members of the Maine Choice Coalition, has a specific role to play in building grassroots support and doing education relative to the issues. Please see several related articles in this issue of the Maine NOW Times about how you can help.

A Call to All Maine NOW Members to Host House Meetings

An important element in the effort to defeat the “Partial-Birth Abortion” Ban

House meetings are an easy way to get information out about the truth regarding so-called “partial-birth abortion” and help people who may not be activists get used to talking about the issues involved. It is as easy as setting aside a couple hours during an evening or afternoon, arranging with Maine NOW for a facilitator (unless you are comfortable with the role yourself), inviting a group of people, and putting out some snacks. You do not need to have a fancy home, and you don’t need to spend hours preparing fancy food.

A house meeting generally consists of people talking about what they already know or don’t know about the issue of abortion in the state, viewing a video on the general topic of choice, and having a chance to learn the facts about the current “partial-birth abortion” referendum that will be up for a vote in November. It is an opportunity to talk among our friends and allies - not a debate with people who don’t understand choice.

Maine NOW can supply all materials necessary including:

- * A how-to packet with a checklist for hosting the event.
- * A copy of the video.
- * Handouts for your guests to take home.
- * And a facilitator if you are not comfortable with the role yourself. We can also give you a list of other NOW members in your area, if you’d like to add them to your guest list.

The Maine Choice Coalition has designated House Meetings as a key element in the grassroots effort to support the campaign to defeat this dangerous referendum. If every NOW member hosted a house meeting and got just six friends to attend, we would reach nearly six thousand Maine citizens. We have set a specific goal of having at least one meeting in each Legislative House district by the fourth of July, and are well on our way toward that goal. And part of the plan is to see if at least one person from each house meeting will be willing to go on to host one of their own. The House Meeting project will continue beyond the fourth of July, right up to the vote - but don’t wait until the last minute or the facilitators may be committed to someone else’s meeting!

Even longtime activists who have attended recent house meetings have come away with new insights or information they hadn’t had before. Meetings on college campuses have been successful, as young feminists have been excited to learn more of the history of the legality and illegality of abortions than they had previously been familiar with.

Please don’t wait - schedule your house meeting now. To make arrangements, contact Bangor NOW Coordinator Deanna Partridge at 945-4024 (that is a work number for her) for meetings in the north, or Kim Simmons at 829-3360 in the Portland area. Please also call if you would like to attend a House Meeting in your area.

Maine NOW Turns out for Hearings

Signs favoring choice far-outnumbered signs and banners against at the recent legislative hearings on the various bills seeking to change Maine law as it relates to abortion. And Maine NOW was prominently visible, thanks to the large round NOW posters calling to “Keep Abortion Safe and Legal” held by several members of the Bangor NOW chapter.

Approximately twenty NOW activists joined a couple hundred other citizens at the hearing, voicing their opinions on proposed legislation affecting parental consent for abortion for minors, so-called “partial-birth” abor-

tions, and waiting periods. The Bangor NOW group was prominently featured in a very nice front-page photo in the next day’s Portland Press Herald.

The legislative committee opted to hold hearings for all bills related to abortion on the same day. Members of the public attending the hearing could speak about any of the bills, and could also register their opinions on forms provided by the committee, whether or not they chose to speak. Maine NOW submitted written testimony for the committee’s review.

A.C.T. IV - Help Us ACT Up!

On October 2, 1999, the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine will host A.C.T. , Active Community Training, IV, an annual event to educate and inspire action for economic justice. This year's keynote speaker is Frances Moore Lappe, who wrote the ground-breaking *Diet For a Small Planet*. She is co-director of the Center for Living Democracy and editor of the Center's American News Service. If you live in the greater Bangor area, and would like to help plan events or actions around the keynote, or if you would like more information on the Center's work, please contact the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine at 942-9343.

Celebrating Right to Vote

August 26, 1999, is the 79th anniversary of the Constitutional Amendment granting U.S. women the right to vote. Greater Bangor NOW and the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine will celebrate with an education/action event! Watch for details!

Common Ground Fair!

Don't miss the fun! This year's Common Ground Country Fair will be held September 24-26 in Unity. We need some more volunteers for the Maine NOW booth. At the booth we distribute NOW literature and sell buttons and bumper stickers — and of course talk with folks about feminist issues. Don't be shy — we can pair you up with an experienced NOW volunteer if you'd like.

The CGCF crowd is overwhelmingly friendly, and some people even make an annual pilgrimage to our booth to restock their bumper sticker supply! (No kidding - they TOLD us that). Volunteer slots are approximately 3 hours (with a tad extra to overlap the incoming and outgoing shifts) and a limited number of free passes are available for our volunteers.

Feeling musical? This year we'd like to reinstate our "Five Minutes of Live Music Every Hour on the Hour" on Saturday at the booth. Get a couple of friends together and sing us a feminist song, or play a tune. If you can join us in any of these ways, contact Cynthia at 778-9506 or cynth@gwi.net. I'd love to see you at the Fair!

MWWHC Honors NOW Activist JoAnne Dauphinee

The Mabel Sine Wadsworth Women's Health Achievement Award is given annually to a Maine person who has demonstrated a remarkable contribution to feminist principles in women's health care. Recipients have been actively involved in improving the health care of Maine women over a significant period of time. Recipients are chosen on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to 1) grassroots health care education which promotes self-determination and reproductive freedom of choice for all women, 2) access to quality health care for women with low incomes, 3) full health care rights for lesbian women and gay men, and 4) fostering connections among diverse groups around women's health care issues.

The award was established in 1995 with the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Mabel

Wadsworth herself. This year, JoAnne Dauphinee joins previous recipients Peaches Bass, activist for lesbian health and rights and AIDS educator; Sharon Barker, MWWHC founder, activist and current director of the Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine; and Phil Worden, MWWHC founder, pro bono lawyer and activist.

On May 13, JoAnne's commitment, dedication and effort were recognized during the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center's 15th anniversary dinner. Ruth Lockhart, MWWHC executive director, read a letter from Congressman John Baldacci recognizing JoAnne's service to the people of Maine. Lois Reckitt and Deanna Partridge praised JoAnne and related a funny story or two about their fellow NOW colleague. Mabel Wadsworth personally presented the award to JoAnne.

119th Maine Legislature Adjourns in June

Maine NOW members who serve in the 119th Maine Legislature had about 2900 bills to consider in a busy, but relatively uncontentious session. Seven NOW members serve in the House, and eight of Maine's 35 Senators are NOW members, including Senate Majority Leader Chellie Pingree. Session two begins in January, 2000, and a number of bills being followed at session's end were "carried over." These included Sen. Pingree's bill to "Promote Healthy Maine Families" which would increase access to health care for parents of children covered by Medicaid. NOW Sen. Sue Longley's bill to "Create Quality Child Care Investment Incentives" was also carried over. Several lawmakers who submitted civil rights bills regarding sexual orientation agreed to sign on to Sen. Joel Abromson's version for the next session. If passed, it will go to referendum November, 2000.

As we go to press, most of NOW's end-of-session bills are on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature. Some were amended so may be somewhat different than described. Awaiting the Governor's approval: NOW Sen. Mary Cathcart's LD1512 to "Amend Maine's Family & Medical Leave Act" to allow parents to attend medical & dental appointments and parent-teacher conferences; NOW Sen. Anne Rand's LD1879 to "Increase Access to Basic Needs for Low-Income Maine Children and Families"; NOW Rep. Christina Baker's LD956, an \$8 million, 2-year incentive to expand voluntary home visiting programs, offer parenting education classes, and continue Parents as First Teachers TF; NOW Sen. Susan Longley's LD1446 to "Create a Finance Commission on Quality Child Care" to explore policies advancing quality child care and early education; Rep Steve Rowe's LD1315 providing \$17 million over 2 years primarily to assist working families in meeting their child care needs and to provide more quality child care statewide; Sen. Mark Lawrence's LD1891 to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15-per-hour to \$6.15 by November 2000; LD87 requiring wheelchair access at all Maine polling places; LD2111 to increase the "homeless subsidy" by \$2.1 million, the amount recommended by a '97 TF. Shelter populations have increased 33%, and more than half of clients have mental health and/or substance abuse problems.

Signed into law as we go to press, Rep. Quint's LD1574 (P.L.407) improves access and choices to participants in the Parents as Scholars program; and NOW Sen. Longley's LD1447 (P.L.272) promoting "Family-Friendly Business and Investment Strategies" which allows day care to be a project cost for a "TIF." Several bills addressed "Domestic Violence." The best of those which passed was Rep. Mike Saxl's LD944 to Provide Employment Accommodations for Victims of

Crime. It prohibits employers from failing to accommodate the reasonable needs of a victim of sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence. It would allow unpaid leave for court attendance, among other measures. Several other bills enacted include: NOW Sen. Mary Cathcart's LD1658 requiring the D.A. to provide school superintendents with information on violent incidents or threats; LD1798 to "Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Providing Educators With More Authority to Remove Violent Students from Educational Settings."

Unfortunately, two good anti-violence bills were defeated: NOW Sen. Rand's LD532 would have required a parent, guardian, or anyone having custody of children to keep firearms in a locked container or be fitted with a trigger lock. LD1834 would have directed the State Education Dep't. to provide technical assistance to schools in developing violence prevention and intervention training to educators, staff, and students. It would have provided grants for conflict resolution and peer mediation programs (\$300,000 over 2 years).

A number of proposals NOW was following in the last weeks of the first regular session, though listed as "dead," could potentially have been included in the "Part 2 Budget," such as Sen. Pingree's LD1203 to increase access to prescription drugs for elderly and disabled persons, but I had no timely way to confirm this. Also "dead" but possibly folded into the budget, LD2099 to increase access to dental care, or NOW Sen Mary Cathcart's bill LD1558 to provide incentives for School Breakfast Programs in Maine public schools. NOW was happy to see several bad HIV-related bills defeated!

Mark your Calendars:

The NOW National Conference will be held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, CA July 2-4, 1999. As well as offering the traditional workshop format, this will be an opportunity for NOW members to begin discussion of a new statement of purpose for the organization. The draft re-statement of purpose will then go back to the chapters for review. A vote to accept the proposed language will take place at next year's conference in Miami. A media institute is planned for the Monday following the conference. Building our own feminist media and understanding the new technology is a goal of the institute. More details about the conference can be found in the Spring 1999 Edition of the National NOW Times or by visiting NOW's website at: www.now.org/conference.html. After June 1, only on-site registration is possible. Maine NOW will be reserving a hotel room. Please contact ME NOW if you are interested in attending.

NOW Lesbian Rights Summit

A feminist strategy session for Lesbians and Allies was held in Washington, DC from April 23-25. Among the speakers were Tammy Baldwin, Grethe Cammermeyer, Urvashi Vaid, and Willa Taylor. Musicians included SONIA of disappear fear and the Butchies.

Lois Galgay Reckitt and Jen Collins from Family Crisis Services of Portland co-presented a workshop on Partner Violence in Lesbian Relationships. Renee Berry Huffman was one of the presenters of Women With Multiple Oppressions. Among the interesting workshops I attended were Lesbian and Human Rights: An International Perspective; Organizing for Change: From ABC to www; and Bisexual Politics.

For two hours on Saturday morning, the conference participants were assigned to small strategy working groups. As a facilitator for one of the groups, I asked what our top concerns are, what we should address as a movement, what strategies have resulted in social change, and what strategies should be employed to advance lesbian rights. The results were presented on Sunday before a panel of leaders from nearly every major national Gay/

Lesbian/Bi/Trans organization. Ending racism, classism, sexism, and able-bodyism; preserving reproductive choice, increasing visibility, education, creating policy, were some of the issues important to all. There was a strong message that we need to work together across all the barriers that sometimes divide us. We must be open to cutting-edge strategies as well as traditional ones to achieve our goals.

The low point of the conference occurred when two conference attendees, students from Ohio, were assaulted outside a women's bar on Friday night. Thankfully, they were not seriously hurt. It was a shocking reminder of what we risk every day and how urgent and necessary it is to work for change. As a result, a Take Back the Night Rally was held outside the bar on Saturday night. Another planned action took place on Sunday at noon, when we marched to the steps of the Supreme Court.

Reactions to the weekend were varied, but over all, most women I spoke with found it informative, empowering, and fun. It was an honor to be in the presence of so many courageous lesbian, bisexual, and trans persons, and their allies.

Bangor Pride

If you can be in Bangor on July 10th, don't miss Bangor Pride! Past events have included parades, musical & other talent, sales & info tables, and more! Mark your calendar!

Women's Equality Day

August 26, 1999, is the 79th anniversary of the Constitutional Amendment granting U.S. women the right to vote. Greater Bangor NOW and the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine will celebrate with an education/action event! Watch for details!

Yard Sale Items Needed!

Greater Bangor NOW needs your Spring cleaning articles for the World's Largest Garage Sale on June 19th. If you have books, knick knacks, sports equipment, stereos, tools, appliances, CDs, computers, games, whatever (no clothes please) — deliver anytime to JoAnne's garage, 87 Sunset Strip (off Parkway South), Brewer. If you have some "real good stuff," or "lotsa stuff" we will try to arrange a pick up. Call Jo, day or night, 989-3306. E-mail: feminist@mint.net

Portland Pride Coming

Stay tuned to your statewide/local lgbt? organizations and local news sources for details. Portland Pride will be taking place from Friday June 18 - Sunday, June 20. On Saturday there will be a pride rally and parade, a festival with music, organizations, vendors and a wonderful heady taste of the way life really should be in Maine. For more information, call the Portland Pride Office at 207-774-7800.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN



Maine's Leading Feminist Grassroots Organization

Phone Number: 797-8508



Maine State Coordinator — Renee Berry Huffman 772-3368

Assistant State Coordinator — Cynthia Phinney 778-9506

Scribe — Vacant

Treasurer — Annie Lunt 883-1195

Task Force/Coalition Contacts

Affirmative Action Task Force — 772-7434

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 — Kim Simmons 829-3360

Maine NOW Phone Coordinator — Lucinda McGinn 854-1741

Maine NOW PAC Treasurer — JoAnne Dauphinee 989-3306

Maine NOW Times — Selma Sternlieb 725-7675

Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition — Chris Rusnov 873-0878

Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods — Chris Rusnov 873-0878

NORTHEAST REGIONAL NOW BOARD MEMBERS

Marsha Pappas, Albany, NY Regional Director

Judy Murphy, Manchester Center, VT

Ruth Osborne, Falmouth, ME 797-9772

Renee Berry-Huffman, Portland, ME 772-3368

Andrea Lee, Cambridge, MA

GREATER BANGOR NOW

87 Sunset Strip, Brewer, ME 04412

Coordinator — JoAnne Dauphinee

989-3306

Meets second Monday of each month

GREATER FARMINGTON NOW

PO Box 375, Farmington, ME 04938

Coordinator — Aimee DesRoches

778-6107

GREATER PORTLAND NOW

PO Box 4012, Portland, ME 04101

Contact — Kim Simmons 829-3360

Call for meeting schedule

e-mail feminists:

Cynthia Phinney cynth@awi.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Our vision: to empower women to take feminist action to make feminist social change.

Our top five priorities: ERA, economic justice, eliminating racism, lesbian rights, reproductive freedom. **JOIN US!**

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

NAME (Please PRINT) _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

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

CHAPTER (see above) _____ If there's no chapter near you, leave space blank. We'll 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 needed.

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

I would like to be a sustainer, donating \$ _____ per month. (\$5 minimum per month)

☐ PLEASE CHECK HERE IF YOU DO NOT WANT MAINE NOW TO SHARE YOUR NAME WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

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

SIGN THIS AD TO FIGHT PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION BAN

Maine NOW members are very concerned about the upcoming referendum to ban an emergency abortion procedure. We will be working in several ways to defeat this referendum. This signature ad is one of those ways. We would like to collect enough signatures and money to be able to place this ad in at least 2 major papers in the State. A quarter page ad in the larger papers costs about \$2000.00.

You can help by filling out this form and making copies to give to friends, coworkers, and family members. We are asking for a donation of \$10.00 with your signature to help us pay for the ad. A sliding fee scale is available. (Your name will be included with or without a donation unless you ask us not to include it).

We the undersigned believe that the "partial-birth abortion" ban is an extreme and dangerous measure. It does not make exceptions for serious harm to a woman's health and is clearly designed to eliminate a woman's right to choose. WHY ELSE WOULD WE NEED SUCH A BAN? We already have a law which bans late-term abortion except to protect the health or life of the woman. The proposed ban's vague language and criminal penalty could affect a doctor's medical decision and seriously compromise a woman's health.

In other states when laws similar to this one have been brought before the state courts, they have been struck down because they are unconstitutionally vague. As one Illinois judge said of a ban considered in his state, "...the statute, as written, has the potential effect of banning the most common and safest abortion procedures."

Name _____
*Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone Number _____

☐ I do not want my name used in ad.

Checks are payable to: Maine NOW PAC
Send form and check to Joanne Dauphinee,
87Sunset Stip, Brewer, ME 04412.

*No addresses or phone numbers will appear in this ad.



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